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AUSTRALIAN AND BRITISH SOCCER WEEKLY

AUSTRALIAN AND BRITISH

SOCCER

VOL. 20 No. 918 - TUESDAY 23 FEBRUARY 1999

• REGISTERED BY AUSTRALIAN POST • PUBLICATIONS No. NBQ5726

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Soccerroo Alvin Ceccoli
"Let's go Greek" **p.7**



Olyroo Jason Culina
"Let's go Italian?" **p.5**



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AUSSIE & BRITISH SOCCER WEEKLY

5-13 Garners Ave., Marrickville NSW 2204.

Tel (02) 9562-0559 (Direct Line) Fax (02) 9550-9332

E-mail: soccerweekly@hotmail.com

Published every Tuesday by FLP Pty Ltd. 5-13 Garners Ave., Marrickville NSW 2204

DISTRIBUTION

NSW/ACT: FLP Pty Ltd. 5-13 Garners Ave., Marrickville NSW 2204. Tel: (02) 9562-0500

VICTORIA: FLP Pty Ltd. 72-78 Cripps Street, Collingwood. 3066. Tel: (03) 9486-9522 Fax: (03) 9486-9858

QUEENSLAND: Queensland Newspaper Campbell St, Bowen Hills Qld. 4006 Tel: (07) 3252-6011

SOUTH AUSTRALIA: Advertiser Newspaper Ltd. Waymouth St, Adelaide SA 5000 Tel: (08) 8218-9329

WESTERN AUSTRALIA: Pan Hellenic Emporium, 67 James Street, Perth WA 6000. Tel: (08) 9328-4779

EDITOR: Aidan Ormond

SCANDISK: Alex Stafakas

LAYOUT CO-ORDINATOR: A.D. Akrotas

COLOUR SCANS: Bill Hawthorne

LAYOUT/TYPESetting: Mary Quattrly

FILM PLANNING: Nick Rehoumis, Nick Phillips

..... Almita Vea

PHOTOGRAPHERS: Melbin

CORRESPONDENTS

MELBOURNE: Dwyght Tuffnell

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS: Roy Hay, Craig

QUEENSLAND: Glenn Davis

Wilson, Daryl Katz, Rebecca Stanton, Daniel

WESTERN AUSTRALIA: Richard Kreider

Giorelano, Bonnie Merslades, Franky Cobblers

WOMEN'S SOCCER: Janene Mar

Sydney Reporter: John Economos

Recommended and maximum price: \$3.00

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EDITORIAL* EDITORIAL* EDITORIAL

By Aidan Ormond

I would like to congratulate Leeds United Football Club, its directors and youth coaching staff for its visionary and creative plans for allowing promising young Australian soccer players an opportunity to play for a British nation.

At last, someone is doing something positive to help the British game!

A national team full of Kewells, Okons, Vieris, Zelics, Cansdell-Sherriffs, Bosnichs, Vidmars and Slaters would surely alleviate the moribund state of British national teams. No more struggling to qualify for Euro championships and World Cups. A perfect solution.

Why? Well, apart from their obvious skill and power Australians don't have that 'we're better than those continentals' attitude. And what better synergy than for El Tel Venables to coach them to success?

(Cut to Wembley Super-Stadium 2020. England are lining up with their manager Michael Owen. The national anthem plays and we hear: "Gawd sayve arrrr grayshus Kweeeeen, Gawd sayve arrrr glorrriias Kween, Gawd sayve arrr Kweeen.....")

But the white Knights at Leeds should not stop there. Be bold: Americans, Jamaicans, South Africans, even JAPANESE (they have all played in recent World Cups) should be encouraged to renounce their national

allegiances. They could be taught the words to Knees up Mother Brown and Spice Girls songs, fed chips and egg and no-one would know the difference. Brazilians should even be considered although I am the first to admit they could be a little difficult to win over.

(Cut to Wembley Super-Stadium 2020. "England Manager Owen is now bringing on Yakamoto for Leeds striker Mbootu, and he will play wide in front of Al Lebowski and Digger Wilson).

I know I speak for all Australians when I say that we look forward to seeing Leeds on their end-of-season tour of the 'colony', where our world-renowned Sports Institutes, Academies, and Sports High Schools will be kept open for you; just choose whoever you feel is good enough to play and we will pay for them to get to glamorous Leeds.

We are very friendly (Home and Away is more of a real-life doco than a soapie, did you know?), so feel free to choose whatever you like. We'll even teach God Save the Queen to prospective talents. Can't say fairer than that.

Speaking of the Queen; your contribution to the debate over an Australian Republic has not gone unnoticed by the 'Australians for a Constitutional Monarchy'. They would love to meet you.

And by the way, reports of Australian-based Leeds fans burning their scarves should not be of concern.

It's a sign of respect.

The burning desire to play for the British Home countries is symbolised in this ritual, so don't distinguish our humble antipodean dreams; dreams of representing a nation on the other side of the earth thousands of miles away. It's clearly all so natural.

I will leave you with a compliment. Para-phrasing a former Australian Prime Minister: "Well may we say God Save the Queen, because nothing will save Leeds United". You are visionaries.

Murray's American experience a blast!

By Janene Mar



Julie Murray ... took the US by storm.

Matildas striker Julie Murray returned from San Francisco last Wednesday full of excitement after playing in the first ever FIFA Women's World All-Star Team which defeated USA 2-1.

Julie tells us of her experience ...

On selection: "Being selected in the team was just huge, absolutely fantastic — a dream really. It's one of the things I've been thinking about for a long time but you never know if you'll get selected."

On team gelling: "We had an initial team meeting and discussed things, how we'd play defensive-wise, etc. Only a few of the players didn't speak English, the Russian and North Korean, plus the Chinese girl spoke only a little, but we had translators that first time."

On mixing as a group: "It was great because everyone was just really happy to be there."

The starting lineup: "I guess it was really difficult for the coaches, they didn't know anyone. They said they wanted everyone to play, but three of the other strikers could only play a striker's role. So I was told I'd play central midfield. I was a bit disappointed as I felt I was the best striker there. I really wanted to score and I think if I had played up front, with the opportunities that were there..."

Your own performance: "It's difficult in those types of matches, everyone's trying to impress and I'm a very unselfish player. I thought I distributed the ball well and I took on players — felt quite comfortable on the ball. I don't think I lost the ball once in a tackle or was caught in possession, so I was really happy with that."

Teammates: "Most of the players were technically really good. The German players was quite good in central midfield, and we had a really strong defence with Linda Medalen, the Danish player, the French and the North Korean. The Africans weren't as tactically aware but not too bad skills."

The Game: "The game was very very entertaining, end to end with shots from both teams. There were great skills and touches and dribbling — it would have been the best game to watch."

Press Conference: "There were 100 or so media personnel and we were there for about two hours. One naive American journo asked me 'Do you think it'll be 10, 20-nil?', and I said 'To who?'"

On the Americans losing - "The US were completely shocked, stunned to lose the game."

A special moment: "I was sitting at the airport waiting to fly back home and an American policeman came up to me and said 'You played on the World Team — number 3' Then he added that his daughter thought I was great. Anyway then we were sitting on the plane and the same guy came onto the plane with a special World Cup ball for me to autograph. He must've called his wife to bring the ball to the airport especially, found out what flight I was on and got on the plane. I just thought 'wow'. Then other people on the plane started asking who I was to which he announced 'This is one of the best soccer players in the world.'"

Calling all Australian players of Pakistani descent Your country needs you. Jamaica made it to France '98 with the help of English players of West Indian descent, and now the Bhangra Boys are set to follow the Reggae Boyz as Pakistan prepare for the next World Cup reports Craig Wilson.

Currently ranked 176 in the world (a lower ranking than Rwanda, Macao or Tonga), the Pakistani FA recently held trials in England, where even the most talented Asian players are finding it difficult to break into the professional game.

The aim was to create a team of gifted players to tour the Mother country and raise the standard of the local game. The all expenses paid trip will culminate in the best players being picked for their country. "If we find some really talented lads, then the Pakistani board will welcome them into the national team with open arms," said Pakistan Sports Association spokesman Zaid Bokhari. "If Jamaica and Iran can make it to the World Cup finals then so can we."

Lancashire semi-professional Jaiwad Khan, ex-Bury and Jankovski Purkva (Finland), but now playing in non-league football, has already represented his country.

The experiment has been such a success that the Pakistani FA have now spread the net wider, and are looking to Australia for skilful footballers. So if you were born in Pakistan or have parents or grandparents from the country, contact the PFA in Rawalpindi. Perhaps you could be on your way to Japan and Korea 2002?

*Last week's back page pic of Lisa Casagrande was courtesy of the Northern Star in Lismore.

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Australian News

HODGSON DENIES SOCCEROO TALKS

By John Economos

High profile Englishman and former Blackburn Rovers manager, Roy Hodgson, made an appearance last Sunday night at Sydney United Sports Centre to watch his first League match in Australia on this his second visit to our nation. Even prior to his arrival late last week, rumours quickly flared throughout Australia that Hodgson was in fact coming here purely to be interviewed for the national position, left vacant by fellow Englishman Terry Venables.

Such speculation Hodgson quickly dispelled as we spoke to him on Sunday.

The pleasant speaking 52 year old Hodgson had toured here 10 years ago as manager of Sweden's leading club side Malmo F.F. for a two match series against the Socceroos, which we won in both games.

This time round Hodgson is a specially invited guest as speaker at this week's 'World Congress of Science and Football'.

When questioned would he be interested in the national coaching position of Australia, Hodgson dispelled it. "No I'm not in Sydney for that reason, even though last night (Saturday) I did have dinner with your officials Basil Scarsella David Woolley and Tony Labbozzetta. There were just general discussions that took place.

"I myself don't know what my future is. I came here to do a job for the A.I.S. and I have had to extend my stay here. But Australia was very kind enough to have paid for my wife's airfares to come out as well," Hodgson pointed out.

"When you have worked at Blackburn it's nice to be able to have the chance to come out and see Australia. It's just such a very long trip," he added.

Today (Tuesday) he will be in Canberra at the A.I.S. and on Wednesday he will be

out at Marconi at 7pm.

"Whilst I'm here I'd love to see as much of your country as possible.

"But unfortunately I have to be back in England, before I leave again, to be in Prague and then Belgium between March 7th and 14th for some work with coaches in those countries.

"I'd also like to meet some of your young coaches, people such as David Mitchell and Graham Arnold."

In fact Hodgson knew Mitchell as a play-

er back in England whilst the international marksman was playing with Chelsea and Hodgson wanted to sign him for his Swiss club Xamax.

As we now all now, he has coached at international and club level in Sweden, Switzerland, Italy and England. So what did he think of his first Aussie match?

"The first 60 minutes I saw a very good standard of Soccer which reminded me of my playing days in South Africa where years ago I played for Berae Park in

Victoria.

"The conditions were hot and we played on a dry pitch, just like here.

"This game had a wonderful atmosphere and it was a fine performance by Glory after coming back from being two goals down with their goalkeeper (Anthony Franken) making two very fine saves."

What did he think of Australia's style of Soccer?

"When I came out here, I didn't know I would be seeing a game, but Jim Selby

(Soccer Australia's Director of Coaching) suggested it.

"The game didn't surprise me at all given the heat and dry pitch."

And what about the Socceroo coaching position? "Look, I really don't know what my future is, or going to be, as I have made no plans. All I'm really able to tell you is this just one thing.

"No matter what, or where, my next job will be, it must be able to give me lots of personal pleasure."

DISGRACEFUL 'JOURNALISM'

By John Economos

That's the sort of sensational headline the Sydney Daily Telegraph loves to print. However, hostile criticism from justifiably angry Soccer supporters, rained in on the offices of this newspaper following a dreadful, and false, front page lead story that appeared in that newspaper's late edition last Monday (15 February).

The screaming headline read: 'SOCCER FANS BRAWL', in reference to a minor scuffle at the Sydney Olympic vs Sydney United match played last Sunday week at the Belmore Sports Ground. This piece of irresponsible, sensationalistic journalism, was nothing short of an unadulterated, vitriolic exercise in Soccer bashing.

How does this writer know?

He was at the match reporting on the game together with four other Soccer journalists.

All five of us witnessed no brawl, no crowd violence or hostile fighting, as reported.

The article written by a Police reporter, went on to spice up her damaging to Soccer story, with erroneous 'facts' to shock and impress that newspaper's readers.

She reported '400 spectators brawled, hurling missiles, abused and hurled ethnic taunts' at one another during the halftime break. She reported only eight police were on duty at the match, when in fact there were 10 on roaster.

The story went on to state that four policemen were injured, yet our inquiries turned up nobody was hurt at all, (three empty drink cans had been thrown).

The article went on to say that the violence erupted at halftime and unquestionably inferred that it had been ignited by the sending off of Sydney Olympic's Chris Kalantzis. Indeed Kalantzis was sent off, but it was in the 60th minute of the match, a full 15 minutes after the stated brawl that was supposed to have erupted.

This fact alone leads this writer to believe that the 'four hundred phantom

brawlers' must have all been clairvoyants, blessed with the prior knowledge that Kalantzis was going to be sent off in the second half.

The 'Soccer-bashing journalist' reported the crowd as being 8,000 when in fact there were 5,107 at the ground, and about 500 in the area where the brawl was supposed to have happened.

The journalist added further fuel to her story by inflaming the situation, stating that there had been 'existing tensions' between the supporters. Again sheer rubbish. The teams for years have been largely supported by Greeks (Sydney Olympic), and Croatians (Sydney United). There has never been any hostile rivalry between these two big clubs whatsoever.

In fact, when United thrashed Olympic at Edensor earlier this year, there was no trouble at all. What 'historic intense rivalry'?

Yet instead of hanging her head in shame following her first viciously inaccurate article that had appeared in the Monday edition, and despite a strong communique having been fired out the same afternoon by the National Soccer League, strongly denying her published 'facts', the said Police reporter followed this story up the very next day with another journalist with yet another re-hashed version, or beat up, of the previous article.

This means, the Telegraph had elected to totally ignore Soccer Australia's strong and urgent communique of denial.

What total irresponsibility. Justice sometimes has to be enforced. What are our Soccer authorities going to do about this total and malicious fiasco?

Stefan Kamasz, the League's General manager, stated to us late last week that the League has already approached that newspaper's managing editor and lodged a very strong complaint with him.

Kamasz also stressed that if no satisfaction is forthcoming, Soccer Australia is lodging a full report to the Press Council this week.

The Telegraph has since printed letters from readers and all letters support the truth, that this was a media beat-up. Now that's getting to the point.

*This article is being sent to the Daily Telegraph.

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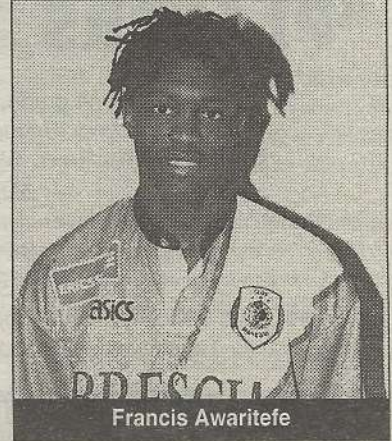
Brad Maloney



Vlado Zoric



Kim



Francis Awaritefe

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Australian News

YOUNG AUSSIES MAKING WAVES ABROAD

Carlton report that Vince Grella is currently enjoying life, if not Club success, with Empoli in Serie A. Grella's team is currently bottom of the table and staring relegation to Serie B in the face — but it doesn't seem to be phasing the young Australian too much at the moment.

"This experience is unbelievably enjoyable, and to tell you the truth, I'm just happy being here and everybody is treating me really well," says the 19 year old.

"I've had an opportunity that some people would chop their arm off for. I've played against three of the biggest clubs in Serie A and I feel confident.

"Six months ago I was fighting to stay on the pitch for more than a week with all sorts of niggling injuries and I didn't know where I was going but since I took my chance with Empoli, I've been so happy."

"It's a little bit harder being away from home but playing against the likes of Juventus and Inter Milan, those good times take away from the bad times and I hope to stay on in Italy."

Grella has had mixed fortunes on the field — he played the second half for Empoli against Internazionale in Milan just recently, with the press rating him as the best on ground for the visitors, yet he had to be content sitting on the bench the week after, with his team losing 3-2 to Salernitana.

"The whole week I felt I was looking good and played with



Vince Grella ... my mate Zinedine!

the youth team in the Viareggio Tournament against Parma where I had a blinder and got the trophy for best on field.

"All reports said I was playing extremely well but at the final training session I wasn't named in the starting eleven — that's life in Italian football.

"We're not really expected to knock off big teams because basically we're a small town playing in a big league but we're expected to fight and be competitive and it's something the fans didn't really see against Salernitana.

"The team was booed off the pitch and the fans were singing a song along the lines of 'go to work' meaning instead of playing soccer go find a job or in Italian 'va lavorare'.

"I think that experience was also good for me though, because as a young person I have to learn to deal with it — one day you're the toast of the town and people are pinning labels on you — the next day well, not so good."

Grella arrived in Italy on October 15 last year, after participating in just one game for Carlton in the new Ericsson Cup season.

One month later he marked France 98 and Juventus hero Zinedine Zidane for half a match.

"It just goes to show what a funny game soccer is.... But as I said before, I'm as happy as Larry — isn't that what they always say — who is Larry?

Another Carlton old boy Andrew Vlahos is settling in nicely at Panathinaikos, he recently came on as a sub in the Greek

Cup where his side went through 5-0 on aggregate, but sadly for ex-Wolves striker Kosta Salapapdis, at Spanish club Compostela, he has an achilles tendon injury and will be out for at least four months. He will be home for a break soon.

"The league is very strong and fast. The money is unbelievable, the home I have is beautiful and I have a luxury Fiat car. The clubs are very wealthy, with a number of South American and Euro players, but it is very cold!" said Salapapdis to Soccer Weekly's junior reporter Mark Stavroulakis.

In club news back home, Carlton is tying in with Hanna Sports. There will be instore appearances and Hanna will sell Carlton shirts.

Meet the players every Friday and Saturday at the Doncaster, Southland and Moonee Ponds stores.

This promo runs till Sunday 7 March. Contact the club for details.

SUTHERLAND HOST SPIRIT IN FRIENDLY

By Ashley Hyne

Graham Arnold pronounced himself well satisfied after a midweek trial match victory for the Spirit over NSW side Sutherland Sharks by five goals to nil at Seymour Shaw Park in Miranda.

The match, played as part of the transfer deal of old Sutherland boy Paul Henderson, was a trial run for the two new Asian imports, Paul Foster and Matthew Bingley.

"We only had three first teamers out there so to beat a State League side 5-0 is good.

"Foster's work rate is good and he showed he can put the ball in the back of the net, but he's only been in Australia for three days so he's a little blunt. I told Matthew (Bingley) to just go from box to box and not get into any tackles."

The two are recent fall outs from the Asian crisis in which players' contracts are being contested by cash strapped clubs. Despite his recent performances in Hong Kong Foster recently left his club over cash disagreements.

Conscious of losing a proportion of his young squad to the Nigerian World Youth Championship, Arnold is keen to add weight to the first team.

Ironically it was the youngsters who seemed to shine under the darkness of Seymour lights.

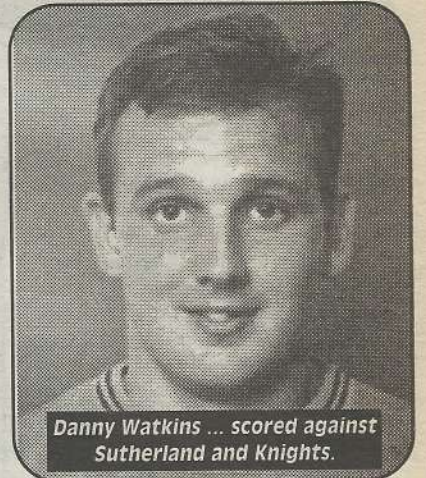
Antony Fariah, the lightening fast winger showed his pace once again out wide in the first half, and James Stubbs-Mills caused great problems for the home defence in the second half with some searching passes from the right wing.

This being said the scoreline dominance was a little flattering to Spirit with three of their goals coming from set pieces and the other two from the long diagonal ball into the centre of defence.

Mendez was lucky not to get blown from a blatant hand ball in the 40th minute, and luckier still to get the benefit of the doubt when he was adjudged to have been pushed in the area at the end of his run.

His penalty was saved by Olla, but Foster followed up.

Sutherland were unlucky on occasions and probably had the move of the game denied by Perosh's solid block when Levi Stephen's shot



Danny Watkins ... scored against Sutherland and Knights.

was charged down. Markopolous' mazy run on the wing before sending out a beaut ball to Stephen was a show stopper.

Arnold was in praise of his youngsters at the end: "We like to get as much width as possible in our play and Stubbs-Mills is doing a good job."

Sutherland: Olla, Daley, Harris, Richardson, Summers, Bideau, Markopolous, Stephen, Hobbs, Mozsny, Corbo. subs: Pillay, Giraldo, Podesta, Riley, Tolson.

Spirit: Perosh, Bosnar, Wearne, Moss, Bingley, Watkins, Mendez, Stubbs-Mills, Foster, Fariah, Zane (subs Griffiths, Snyder, Lara).

See the stars from Sydney Olympic tomorrow lunchtime at Grace Bros City store (L4 sports department). The players you can see tomorrow are Scotty Thomas, Peter Tsekis and Pablo Cardozo.

Plans are in place for Sydney's Parramatta stadium to become an all-seater. Presently the seating is for 16,000, but with 2,000 behind each goal the stadium will be 20,000 all-seated. While the state government is favourable, funding still has to be found. And the Parramatta bid for NSL inclusion will, at this point, not include the input of Super League side Blacktown City.



King of Compostela ... Kosta Salapapdis with his new club's shirt.



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16-TEAM NSL?

By Dwyght Tuffnell

Soccer Australia chairman Basil Scarsella has said that next year's Ericsson Cup competition is likely to be made up of 16 teams.

Despite question marks hanging over clubs such as Gippsland Falcons, Sydney United, Adelaide Sharks and Melbourne Knights, Scarsella said that no side will be ejected from the league.

"We don't want to revisit the time two or three years ago where, overnight, we decided to kick clubs out of the league and end up in court," said Scarsella.

"As far as Soccer Australia is concerned, there will be the 15 existing clubs and one more."

Auckland Kings seem favourites to enter the league although consortiums from Sydney and Adelaide will also be in the running.

Auckland, along with the consortium from Parramatta, are the only two formal proposals so far, with, it seems, the Kings likely to take their place in the 1999-2000 season.

Scarsella said having the Kings in the league will boost the competition's image.

"I regard it as a compliment that New Zealand wants to put a team in our league.

"Auckland will provide a major population, along similar lines to what Perth does and it will improve the marketability of the game and lead to things such as bigger corporate sponsorship."

Scarsella said that, should a club fold and not be able to take its place in the next season's competition, more than one side would come in.

Also on the agenda at Soccer Australia is the promotion/relegation issue.

Scarsella said: "I'm a traditionalist. Mine, and Soccer Australia's preference is to have promotion and relegation.

"The difficulty is finding a formula that everybody is satisfied with. We have one in place at Soccer Australia but we do intend to find a better one." Scarsella said that it will be looked at in a couple of years time.

"The sport throughout the world thrives on the competition at the top and bottom ends, we should have the same."

See Basil Scarsella's interview with the Four Diegos on page eight.

Australian Features

MARUSIC LEADS IN PLAYER POLL



Northern Spirit's Kresimir Marusic is running away with the Pascoe Vale Sportsman/ABSW Player of the Year award. Marusic is sitting on 21 votes, four ahead of his nearest rival, South Melbourne's David Clarkson reports Dwyght Tuffnell.

After a disappointing stint with Carlton, Marusic has recaptured the mercurial form that led him to winning the Ericsson Cup Player of the Year with Sydney United two years ago.

And with Clarkson currently out injured, Marusic has an excellent chance of winning the magnificent trophy and cheque for \$500, kindly denoted by Maurice Raponi of Pascoe Vale Sportsman.

But poised to make a late charge are Joe Tricarico of Carlton, John Buonavoglia of Newcastle Breakers and leading scorer Pablo Cardozo, who all sit on 14 votes.

Below is the top five vote-getters of all the Ericsson Cup clubs in this years Pascoe Vale Sportsman/ABSW Player of the Year award.

ADELAIDE CITY

Alex Tobin - 12
Brad Hassell - 10
Angelo Costanzo - 6
Milan Ivanovic - 5
Jason Petkovic - 4

ADELAIDE SHARKS

Richie Alagich - 9
Alex Kuzmanovic - 8
Nathan Wildy - 5
Alex Duric - 5
Derek Poimer - 5

BRISBANE STRIKERS

Kasey Wehrman - 12
Steve Laybutt - 10
Clint Bolton - 5
Des Hughes - 5
Jeromy Harris - 4
Stuart McLaren - 4

CARLTON

Joe Tricarico - 14
Simon Colosimo - 11
Lubo Lapsansky - 9
Alex Moreira - 8
Marco Bresciano - 7

MARCONI FAIRFIELD

Mike Smith - 8
Kris Trajanovski - 6
Francis Awaritefe - 6
Brad Maloney - 5
Christian Care - 5

NEWCASTLE BREAKERS

John Buonavoglia - 1
Bob Catlin - 10
Shane Pryce - 10
Andy Roberts - 6
Robert Shannon - 4

PERTH GLORY

Scott Miller - 9
Robert Trajkovski - 8
Danny Milosevic - 8
Danny Hay - 8
Bobby Despotovski - 7

SYDNEY OLYMPIC

Pablo Cardozo - 14
Scott Thomas - 12
Mehmet Durakovic - 6
Brett Emerton - 4
Ante Juric - 4

WOLLONGONG WOLVES

Scott Chipperfield - 8
Raymond Younis - 8
Matthew Horsley - 7
Sebastian Sinoczi - 5
Saso Petrovski - 5
Paul Reid - 5

CANBERRA COSMOS

Amarildo Miglietti - 9
Anthony Magnacca - 6
Vilson Knezevic - 6
Paul Roberts - 4
Peter Buljan - 3
Ivan Zelic - 3

GIPPSLAND FALCONS

Levent Osman - 7
Brian MacNicol - 6
Manny Gotis - 3
Marko Perinovic - 3
Bojo Jevdjic - 3

MELBOURNE KNIGHTS

Zeljko Susa - 9
Ransford Banini - 7
Michael Reda - 4
Ante Kovacevic - 4
Martin John - 3

NORTHERN SPIRIT

Kresimir Marusic - 21
Robbie Slater - 13
Paul Bilokapic - 7
Gabriel Mendez - 5
Robert Enes - 4

SOUTH MELBOURNE

David Clarkson - 17
Michael Petkovic - 12
Vaughan Coveny - 9
Fausto De Amicis - 7
Paul Trimboli - 6

SYDNEY UNITED

Richard Plesa - 10
Velimir Kupresak - 10
Joel Griffiths - 8
Walter Ardone - 7
Mile Sterjovski - 7
Jacob Burns - 7

STALLIONETTES GO CORPORATE!



One of the star Stallionettes, Elena Di Bella, who is also on this issue's cover.
Pic by Melbin.

By Aidan Ormond

You know, it's a difficult job this Soccer journalism. For example, this week we had to interview the Marconi Stallionettes.

I was given this onerous (!!) task, so, over a coffee, we got the inside scoop on life in one of Australian soccer's most visual and choreographed cheerleading teams from this week's cover girl, the exceptionally talented, Elena Di Bella, and the troupe's coach Dayna Groppenbacher.

So Elena, how did you start with the Stallionettes?
We went to the audition about a year and a half ago and were lucky enough to be deemed good enough.

Did you realise there would be so many performers?
No, it was such a surprise, normally there are only five or six, but it's great.

Look I would like to see 100-200 Stallionettes

Yeah, a whole stadium of Stallionettes, would look great on TV!

It looks hard work Elena, how often are you training?

Monday nights we work very hard, and of course we perform every second Saturday, where we get together before the game to hone our new routines.

Tell me, have you ever felt like telling Frank Farina to move a certain player wider, play a screener, drop someone on the dangerman and play Bugsy deeper?

Yeah, we watch and we wish we could have our say!

I guess sponsorship for the Stallionettes would be something great for the right company?

Yeah, with us being on TV and in the print media (Soccer Weekly is the print media partner) and of course the profile of the club and Soccer in general, so we are sure a company would love to get on board.

So what's the role of your type of group?

We are there to entertain and support the team and provide the fan club for the guys.

And after the game do you go for a boogie at Club Marconi?

Yeah, we go out, have dinners and even sometimes we go to Club Equinox at Marconi's Social Club.

And who are your fav Stallions?

Care, Galluzzo and Awaritefe, everyone loves Francis!

So do you guys do anything over the winter break.

Perform at the end of season presentation night then relax and start auditioning for the new season.

And Dayna, you must be excited at the prospect of sponsorship for the Stallionettes?

The Stallionettes are now in their second season, and, as we move into the new millennium, the sponsorship side of things is being addressed by me.

The opportunity for a fully choreographed professional cheer squad to represent a company at every home game is now on offer.

We will submit a proposal to those interested, and welcome prospective sponsors to any of our remaining home games to see why this is such an exciting opportunity.

Marconi plays South Melbourne this Saturday night. For more info call me, Dayna Groppenbacher, on 0419277022

Thanks ladies, by the way who's in the Stallions character costume. Is it Raul Blanco or Les Scheinflug?

(Together) No, and we're not telling!!

MILLION DOLLAR JASON

By John Economos

Jason Culina, Sydney Olympic's attacking 18 year old international midfielder, is almost certain to be sold within the next 10 days to a European club in a transfer deal that will yield more than \$1million dollars.

Over the past few weeks Sydney Olympic have been inundated with various inquiries, all expressing interest to buy their skilled teenaged midfielder.

But the main three serious researchers have been Denmark's Brondby, Parma from Italy and much more recently, the giants of Italy's Serie A, Juventus.

Last year there were also inquiries for Culina by AS Roma when he was still with Sydney United. However when Culina broke his leg in a training match those inquiries quickly lapsed.

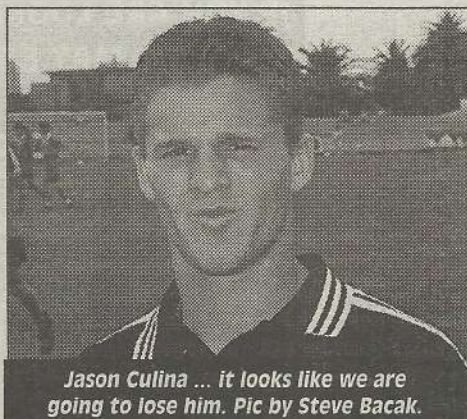
Despite his tender 18 years, Culina has amassed 35 matches all up for Australia's Youth, Olympic Games squad and one match for the senior team last year against the U.S.A.

All last weekend rumours have been flying around Sydney thick and fast on Culina's pending sale and to which European club.

Culina's agent, I.M.G.'s Bernie Mandic, told Soccer Weekly: "This area is something where I'm not allowed to get involved till the buying club has made contact and a firm offer which is agreed upon by Olympic. Scouts from European clubs have already been out here in Australia, not only looking over Jason playing, but other young players also in the National League."

"We have a FIFA licensed agent in Claes Elafalk who is the man. All I know is that clubs have already been talking to Olympic about Jason," stated Mandic.

Jason himself, said: "I don't know what clubs are after me, except that I really want to go to Europe more



Jason Culina ... it looks like we are going to lose him. Pic by Steve Bacak.

than anything else. But one thing is certain, this week I'll be in the Youth squad's training camp till Friday and if I do make the cut to go to the World Youth finals in Nigeria, I will definitely go before I think of heading off to join a European club."

Former Australian World Cup coach Arok, was far more specific in clearing the mystery.

"Yes we've had various inquiries for the kid from overseas, but the main three and serious inquiries have come from Parma, Brondby as well as from Juventus."

"European agents first made contact with our Chairman Nick Politis when he was recently in London on a personal business trip. It was Nick that spoke directly to them over there."

"Since then, we have received just one firm offer in writing, and that was from Brondby who have put on the table a firm offer of 1.3 million German marks."

"I signed the kid because he to me, was a very good young talented prospect and could in the near future be an excellent investment for this Club."

NEXT WEEK

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Australian Features

ROY'S THE BOY

By Les Murray

With coaches, coach sackings and new coaching appointments in the air (when are they not?) it is time again to re-visit the matter of the next Socceroo coach.

Not that, in this instance, I want to again indulge in a roll call of the best available coaches worldwide although, by digression, I should mention that since my last such roll call in these pages both Glen Hoddle and the enigmatic and undeniably great Arrigo Sacchi have become available. What a tragedy Arrigo has become. The likeable bald man, with the flashing palmolive smile, in the late 80s created in his AC Milan the finest club team since the great Real Madrid of the '50s.

Then, as coach of the Azzurri, he controversially steered Italy to the World Cup final. But then, due to his eccentric insistence on his straight-jacketed tactical ideology, failure after failure. He was sacked by Italy, by Milan after a high profile return and now by Atletico. Maybe Australia is the place for him. At least then, if a similar fate awaited him, we can claim to have sacked one of the greatest coaches of all time. But then, we don't sack big name, failing national coaches do we?

No, a much more realistic option is another foreign celebrity who is currently among our midst. Roy Hodgson (who will be a studio guest on SBS' On The Ball next Friday), unlike the eccentric and one dimensional Sacchi, is broadly respected. He's a big boy in both FIFA and UEFA circles. In both Euro '96 and France '98, he was on the narrow panel asked to name the team of the tournament.

We have actually known him a while. We first met him in the late '80s when he coached the Swedish club Malmo which toured Australia. He was a rare thing then, an unknown Englishman coaching successfully on the Continent.

He was a stylish, broad-minded man, a superb linguist, oozing charm and intellect and very gracious in acknowledging the qualities of the Socceroos who beat and outplayed his team. My first thought was why couldn't England have a coach like him?

Later the money wooed him to a Swiss club and within a short time he was coach of Switzerland. The Swiss qualified for the 1994 World Cup - their first appearance since 1966 -

and did splendidly well, a long distance beyond what was expected of such a small, essentially non-pedigree country. The Swiss, for the first time, displayed some self belief.

He continued to spearhead Switzerland into the Euro '96 finals. Before he could consummate that success he was enticed away by his greatest opportunity, the big lira and Inter Milan. There, in that world of success or nothing, he revived the fortunes of the nerazzurri to heights they had not reached in years. But because the title did not come, and Inter became increasingly impatient, he grabbed an offer to go home to England and to Blackburn Rovers.

Now this man, this wordly man who had coached in three countries and spoke fluent Swedish, French, German and Italian, tried in vain to make it in his homeland. His first season was successful enough. No championship but a place in Europe. When things began to go wrong in his second season he was shown the door.

Who knows what the reason was? Maybe it was his long isolation from England, and England's even longer isolation from the rest of Europe. I would like to think that was it, not his coaching ability for that, surely, had been proven already.

Hodgson now awaits the inevitable vacancy that will occur for him at the end of the European season when clubs, some big clubs, will be wanting to start from scratch after less than successful seasons. Clubs like Juventus, Real Madrid, Paris Saint-Germain, and PSV.

And then, if Keegan doesn't relent, there is the England job. From an English point of view, I maintain Hodgson is the best man for that almost impossible job. The isolation of the English mentality and English playing methods have long plagued England's capacity for sustained victories against foreign opposition. In my view no previous England coach (although Venables came close) truly understood the differences and all were unable to completely adapt. Hodgson, as a successful coach who was honed not on English but on Continental football, is the only man with the right credentials.

As for Australia, my fear is that Hodgson will wait to see what's available in Europe before even seriously considering any offers from Down Under. Money, of course, will come into it too.

But if he wants a low-pressure job, with real creative challenges, supervised by a meek and accommodating press, in a country with an incomparable lifestyle, Australia is the place for him.

And if he did the job full time, as an Australian resident, there would surely be no objection from any Australian quarter.

CHANGE MANAGEMENT

By Sports Psychologist Kieran Morrow



Recently Mark Viduka was alleged to have suffered a nervous breakdown which prevented the \$8 million Melbourne Knights transfer player from commencing play with the Celtic in the Scottish League. Although conflicting reports surfaced as the legitimacy of the claim, Celtic management maintained that Viduka was mentally unfit to play.

So, what does this mean? Is he psychotic? My guess is not at all! It is more likely that this young man, for many years just another National Soccer League player on a modest salary, found it difficult to cope. "What with?", I hear you ask. "Surely the money he gets paid to play now would not be too hard to deal with, nor would the throng of adoring new fans?"

But with all this comes a new lifestyle, new culture, new people ... new pressures! Viduka may not have been adequately prepared to cope. And this has probably affected his on-field performance. One must not underestimate the effect that change can have. It may even be that he missed his mum's cooking (don't we all?!), and cannot cope with the homesickness. Then again it could have been the huge culture shock that accompanies any new country that you visit.

Incidents like these are also not restricted to international soccer transfer deals. They occur almost everyday within all levels of the soccer community. Take the player who moves from the local team into the representative side, ... the Under 9 player in the red team who has to play in the blue team for a couple of weeks, ... the player who has played for the love of the game and is suddenly paid for it as well, ... the coach who moves from NSL coach to XXXX League coach. These are all examples of CHANGE, and if the individual is not prepared then their performance will suffer.

But change is impossible to totally prepare for! There is no way of knowing exactly what your situation will be, nor how thoughts and feels will react to the new experience.

Yet, we can help those about to experience change, including ourselves, by improving the ability to assess problems that may be encountered, gain greater awareness of possible solutions to these problems, and by developing relevant skills to prevent potential problems from occurring. Then when the change comes, the individual will be more confident in their ability to cope.

Take for example, the local player who finds himself or herself playing Zone for the first time. He or she will be overawed - new coach, new players, trip away from home, away from mum and dad, different food, different routines. However, a discussion of these issues with his or her local coach, a sport psychologist, or even mum and dad will help. Make him or her aware of the issue and how it may affect them, and then discuss and even practice possible ways of coping with the issue if it does occur. This may not take away the anxiety that accompanies the change, but the individual will not have to think of the ways to cope while experiencing the anxiety.

They have already thought of this before, and so have some options, and now will be confident, even in the face of anxiety that they will be able to cope. And the effect on their performance will be kept to a minimum!

All change is hard to deal with! But it is confidence in the ability to cope with this change that determines whether we cope or not, not change itself. The more confident we are, the less our performance will suffer.

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Australian Features

CECCOLI'S DREAM START TO EURO CAREER



By Mark Stavroulakis

Australian players have been the focus of an exodus to Europe this year. Former Carlton flyer Andrew Vlahos, South Melbourne duo Tansel Baser and Billy Damianos and Jason Culina (?) are just some of the many players who have, or may, continue their careers elsewhere this season.

Wollongong Wolves is one club that has seen its own mini-exodus. It started in 1996, when the Wolves sold their first ever player to the overseas market. Robbie Middleby, a dynamic midfielder and youth rep joined German Bundesliga team Uerdingen FC.

The most recent signing was former Olyroo member and four-goal hero against Argentina in WYC 97, Kosta Salapasis. He was sold to Spanish second division club Compostela, where he has played regularly.

Unfortunately he picked up an injury on his achilles tendon and faces 3-4 months out.

There was news about a second star departing the Wolves Den, this rumour turned out to be the Real McCoy. Charismatic defender Alvin Ceccoli was sold to Greek giants AEK Athens.

The 23 year old's story is pretty much a rags to riches type. At a very young age, Alvin's dream was to become a professional soccer player. Aged 13, Ceccoli went to UTS Sydney Olympic, where the dream he had of becoming a professional player could be nurtured.



At the age of 15, Ceccoli skipped a grade and went straight into the Sydney Olympic Youth side. Head coach at that time was, and still is, Peter Papanikitas. The coach believed in this young man's potential in making it big, and probably had a say in Alvin's career today - because it is an unlikely scenario that centre forwards make the best defenders.

You see, Ceccoli was an outright centre forward back then. This was until he met the man that changed his career for the better. Papanikitas says that Alvin had the

"speed and strength of becoming a defender", and shifted his position to a left sided full back. Papanikitas added that "Alvin was a potential player, and had all the necessities of becoming a good defender."

"I was lucky enough to introduce this idea to Alvin, which I knew was his position from the start".

This idea proved successful and as time progressed this position was to become his, no matter which team he ventured to.

After Olympic, Ceccoli was to move on where he played under former Australian coach Rale Rasic at Rockdale Suns.

Alvin has a place in England".

If that was not enough, AEK president Dimitris Melisanidis stated that "Alvin runs like a bull and has a shot that could break both posts. This player in my mind can play in England, but right now we are very happy to have him as part of our team".

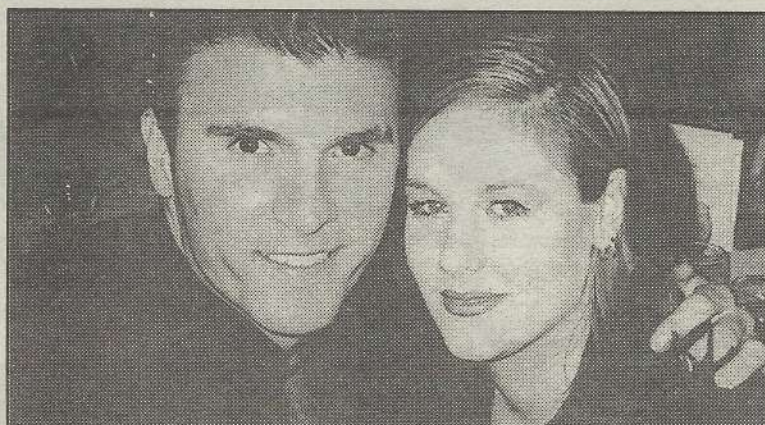
All this was done in one game.

Speaking from his new Greek home, Ceccoli was obviously as happy as can be with the eay things have worked out: "The lifestyle in Greece is great. I really enjoy it here, it's such a relaxed and laid

plane. Injuries and suspensions to both of their left full backs paved the way.

The media went crazy after his first appearance against Panionios, and as soon as the game finished, fans and journalists mobbed the San Marino born defender. Panionio's; coach, and former Liverpool great, Ronnie Whelan spoke highly of Alvin's performance (which AEK won 3-0).

Whelan stated at the press conference after the game that "Ceccoli showed some brilliance on the field, and made some astonishing runs that displayed a new age defender. With performances like that, what's certain is AEK have a good investment towards the future as in my mind,



Alvin Ceccoli with his partner Eva just before departing for AEK Athens.

players that share different backgrounds, so I am not the only one.

"The amount of first class players I play with is phenomenal, as most of the team are in the Greek national side. We even have Christopher Wreh on loan from Arsenal, so playing alongside players at this calibre does improve my game immensely.

"As for the Greek people, they are nice, but tough, Australians are much different people and are friendlier towards you. One thing I will never forget though is the fanaticism involved in the sport. I just completed my first match with AEK against Panionios, I was seen on the street in my car, a mob of fans started to chant my name.

"They all came up to me and hugged and kissed me, they're very supportive, and one things for sure, they're very loud".

So whose idea was it to go to Greece?

The classy defender said: "Brian Hastings is the man who fixed me up with AEK Athens. I appreciate Brian a great deal and thank him for what he has done too not only myself, but to the name of Wollongong as well.

"Wollongong are now famous in Australia for creating players in the overseas market, and I sin-

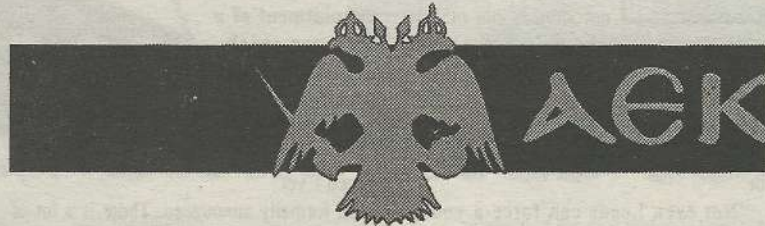
cerely thank Brian for his participation in me making it to the top. Also the board of directors of the Wolves were most helpful as they quickly agreed to my overseas dream as well.

"I also like to thank Nick Theodorakopoulos for his help during my years at the Wolves. I know that Nick being the excellent coach he is, fine-tuned my game for the better. I wish Wollongong all the best, and hope that some day I will return to the Wolves Den and finish off my career as a Soccer player. Lastly, the Wollongong fans, they were great to me from day one, I thank them for cheering me on, even in the bad times."

All this in the space of six years, not bad for a someone that started playing centre forward as a kid. It was also stated in a recent interview with Ceccoli that he would love to retire in France after his career. His glittering career is now in a very exciting phase.

We also ask the question: which Wolf member or members might be next in line to pursue their dreams in playing in Europe?

As for Alvin, the dream is being realised.



It was in these humble surroundings that Wolves coach Nick Theodorakopoulos saw him.

Ceccoli started well with the Wolves introducing a new style of attack with his defence role. His commanding runs down the sideline are what made him famous around the terraces of Brandon Park.

After two and a half years at the Wolves, Alvin achieved much (player of the year was just one accolade).

Further, three Australian caps were presented to the wingback, playing at Suncorp Stadium in the Trans-Tasman Cup against the New Zealanders.

Even though that day was soured by the defeat of the Socceroos, Alvin will long remember this as "my best ever achievement". Things were going great for him.

AEK Athens are no strangers to international soccer, they were once in the quarter-finals of the Champions League, and are regulars in the European Competitions.

Ceccoli's move to AEK is not permanent yet, he has been loaned out to the club until May 30th 1999, and if AEK are interested with the ex-Wollongong defender, then a four year deal is to be put on the table.

Currently AEK has given the Socceroo a lovely unit in Nea Philadelphia overlooking a bay, plus a car to get around the Athens traffic in.

It is also said that Ceccoli is earning as much as four times the amount at what he was paid at Wollongong, so money is obviously not a problem.

Ceccoli was fortunate enough to start in the eleven as soon as he stepped off the

back country. The trouble is though, the language, it's pretty tough, but I am coping with this problem and have an English interpreter, thank God!", he said.

"It is also good that my fiancée Eva is here with me, she too is enjoying the lifestyle as well. One things for sure the traffic here is hectic. In Wollongong, I could drive three km in three minutes, whereas here in Greece, three km is equivalent to one hour driving."

I asked him about the techniques and coaching Greece has, are they as good as or below the Australian standard?

The 23 year old stated: "Nick Theodorakopoulos was a good tactical coach, as he taught me how to exploit the by-line more often.

"He added that finesse to my game, and showed me how to play the ball on the ground. This is not the case here, as my coach (Oleg Blochin) has insisted in me making defence my first priority.

"He wants me to be a bit more cautious on my overlapping runs, but I know under him I will learn".

Blochin is no stranger to Football as he once captained the Russian side in the 1974 World Cup and is considered a hero to many fans in his native country.

"Most players in my team are really good guys. We have a lot of

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Australian Features



SA HEAD HONCHO SPEAKS OUT

Diegos: "You've recently returned from a 'Swatch watch and Swiss Alp' tour of FIFA in Switzerland, where you tabled a quite radical and audacious proposal to Sepp and the boys, mapping Australia's preferred route to the World Cup."

"Can you tell us a little about the proposal and what hurdles are we facing to get the world governing body to adopt the idea?"

Scarsella: "My overseas trip involved discussions with FIFA and the English FA, specifically about Australia's World Cup qualifying path. One of the problems that we've got and that we've had for a long time, is that we only really play one meaningful international every four years, a playoff type game against Iran and in the past, Argentina and Scotland."

"What we are trying to do is to get more competition. Our view is that if we are required to play in a playoff cup tie against a South American team, then we would rather be part of the South American group and play home and away against the other ten nations in that group."

"That would mean of course, playing the likes of Brazil, Argentina and Chile. In brief that is the plan. Our first option is certainly, to get direct qualification to the World Cup through Oceania. Unfortunately the chance of this occurring is remote."

Diegos: "Why South America? Shouldn't we be lobbying to play in Asia?"

Scarsella: "That was also part of the discussions we had. At the end of the day, the FIFA executive decides where the winner of Oceania will play. Our preference, if we can't convince them to give us direct qualification, is to play through Asia."

"Whatever it's going to be, whether it's Asia or South America, we want to be part of a full qualifying round rather than the one-off type games that we have been subjected to in the last 12 years or so."

Diegos: "What strategy are you using to convince FIFA that we should be playing through South America. Have

you thought about adopting the infamous 'Gifts for Votes' approach that certain IOC delegates have enjoyed in the past. No doubt an all expenses paid, 'Museum, Art Gallery and Table Top Dancing night out on the town in Oxford street in Sydney or King street in Melbourne will surely, swing a couple of votes our way?'"

Scarsella: "You guys might be right, but given our financial situation, I don't think

soccer for another country rather than Australia."

"They apparently see it as a way of eliminating the problem of losing the player over an extended period when called up for Socceroo duty, due to Australia's geographical isolation. Is this a problem you also brought to FIFA's notice?"

Scarsella: "There are a number of problems in that issue ranging from how do we keep the players here, which is the most important thing, to once they go overseas, how do we make sure that the players, if selected to play for Australia are in fact, allowed to return."

"To the news that Leeds Utd, is encouraging our players

not to play for Australia, my response is that I hope Leeds don't pick up many of our players. In terms of what we can do, at the end of the day, an individual player must retain his choice of who he wants to play for."

"Not even Leeds can force a young Aussie not to play for Australia. They can't contract players on that basis. But there is no clear cut solution. The only thing that must be maintained is that the individual must always have a choice. In the meantime we must provide an environment in Australia that encourages players to want to come back and represent this country as often as possible."

Diegos: "Basil as you know, we are a worldwide entity. We have many correspondents throughout the globe, one of which, spotted you wining and dining some well-known European soccer celebrities. These weren't informal interviews for the Socceroo job were they?"

Scarsella: "I'm not sure which country your talking about but I assure you that our coach will come from a very large country, even as large as Australia."

Diegos: "So our Maltese correspondent is wrong."

Scarsella: "Our relations with Malta are very, very good. One day we should play their national team."

Diegos: "With the Socceroos scheduled to play a number of internationals this year, has the appointment of a Socceroo coach become a priority?"

Scarsella: "The games haven't yet been formally announced. There is a lot of work going on behind the scenes to try and arrange quality games for the national team. The Socceroo job will be filled sometime in the second half of 1999."

"How quickly it's filled will certainly be influenced by the number of games we get. But at this stage the plan will remain as I have explained it previously."

Diegos: "Basil, the Four Diegos have conducted a very informal poll on who should be our next Socceroo coach. The popular picks so far have been Carlton coach, Eddie Krncevic, Sydney United coach, David Mitchell, America's most famous other woman, Monica Lewinsky, Diego Maradona and the disgraced, Glen Hoddle. What do you think of some of those nominations?"

Scarsella: "What about Bill Clinton?"

Diegos: "Unfortunately, he is a bit tied up at the moment. Some say in more ways than one."

Scarsella: "I think you have some excellent nominations on that list. Only time will tell though. I guess the latest addition is Hoddle, but I'm not sure that we are going to be rushing to appoint him."

Diegos: "Thanks Basil. When you interview Monica Lewinsky for the Socceroo position, make sure the Diegos

are present. We certainly don't want you to be the first Soccer Australia chairman to be impeached. Adios Amigo."

Scarsella: Thanks for the advice Diegos. Perhaps Monica and the Four Diegos would make a good coaching staff. It may not get us to the World Cup, but think of the publicity! Adios Amigos."

Soft Sombrero Moment

"Tacos, Enchiladas, Burritos, Guacamole, Holy Toledo, in the melting pot, and add a touch of Tabasco. A Soft Sombrero Moment with the Four Diegos — we love it!"

It's time to sit back and relax, and share a Soft Sombrero moment with our first Diegos and Soccer Weekly guest this week Chairman of Soccer Australia ... Basil Scarsella.

we are in the position to offer gifts to anyone. That is certainly not an option that we are considering. We want to stay as clean as possible."

Diegos: "Not even a couple of free tickets to a Marconi dinner dance?"

Scarsella: "Well I suppose that's not a bad ploy to use if we had to."

Diegos: "When you entered the cigar puffing, caviar munching inner sanctum at FIFA as the representative of Aussie soccer, did feel that your concerns were given a genuine hearing and were you in any position to flex your muscle on a matter such as this one?"

Scarsella: "I must say that once I walked in there and had a white coffee with no sugar, the reception could not have been better. We are regarded as friends by FIFA and they regard Australia as critical in the future development of Oceania."

"Can we flex our muscle? I think flexing our muscle probably doesn't work in the long run but the discussion I had with Sepp Blatter was certainly very positive. He understands our problem and he has asked us to put in a submission via our confederation, to be tabled at FIFA's next meeting scheduled in March."

Diegos: "Some disturbing news that we received over the Four Diegos fax recently, was that overseas clubs are pressuring our kids to play international



Last week we asked if you could recognise any of the players from this shot from the Australian Under 16s from 1987. We found four, back row (l to r): Mark Bosnich, Dominic Longo and Steve Horvat. Front row is Matt Bingley.



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Australian Features

The Four Diegos continue their VW Combi Van tour of the globe by dropping in on Soccerroo, former Olyroo and current star Blackburn Rovers goalkeeper John Filan. Our Second Guest of the Week is a man who, through sheer patience, hard work, pure persistence and rare talent, has earned the reputation as one of the best shot stoppers in the English game. After biding his time as Coventry City and Blackburn Rovers' No.2, this season he has grown in stature and further confirmed why Australia is one of the best goalkeeper producing countries in the world.

Diegos: "Aussie goalkeepers are certainly the flavour of the month in the UK at the moment. Of the three plying their trade in the English Premiership — Bosnich, Schwarzer and yourself, it seems that you're the one who prompts the question 'who the hell is this Aussie upstart with the gloves on?' 'The Diegos know that you are the great John Filan but can you tell the rest of Australia about your soccer travels since you left home many years ago?'"

Filan: "I left just after the 1992 Olympics in Barcelona. Since then I've travelled around a bit, a gypsy type of career if you like, up until just recently.

in the FA cup. We were thinking the worst when you were stretchered from the park wearing a neck brace. Miraculously you played the next week. Was the injury as serious as it looked and did you employ the services of Glenn Hoddle's faith healer, Eileen Drewery to get you right so quickly?"

Filan: "Getting Hoddle's faith healer may well have been a good option at the time because I certainly didn't feel too good after I took that spill. When the physio came out and realised that I had fallen on my head, he wasn't as worried as usual because I have been known as being a bit of a thick-head in the past. Thinking back,

"It seemed that at stage that there were a number of people interested in the job. But it looks as though Soccer Australia has let it go for too long and that the initial interest has died away. At present I've got coaches and managers at our club asking me who the manager is and I can't really tell them. Maybe the Aussie decision makers have missed the boat a little bit on this one but I guess that's something Soccer Australia has got to sort out itself."

Diegos: "Your new manager, Brian Kidd was the famous number two under Alex Ferguson at Manchester United for many years. He has done a

used to some weird things over here."

Diegos: "You picked up the Wilkinson Sword Player of the Week award for your display against Aston Villa recently. How are the golden disposable razors going and do you think it was your best performance thus far?"

Filan: "In terms of the razors, I don't really shave that often. It did go well at Aston Villa though. It was a great team performance and our first win away from home for the season. On that side of it we were very happy. The Wilkinson Sword prize they gave me was a bag. I don't know what there trying to say by giving a goalkeeper a

FILAN'S CAREER REALLY FLOWERING AT ROVERS

Early on I went to Cambridge for a couple of seasons in the second division and then moved to Coventry where I didn't have the best of times.

"At the start of last season I ended up at Blackburn and it's gone well since then."

Diegos: "It seems that every overseas club want an Aussie goalkeeper nowadays. What special qualities do you think Aussie keepers have that overseas goalkeepers don't have, and, do you think the myth that young Aussie keepers have to strangle man-eating crocodiles for training has any thing to do with the fact that they are in such great demand at the moment?"

Filan: "You're probably right. I think the Aussie boys are a bit crazier than the English keepers. We tend to get involved in a few things that the English keepers

in that respect, it was probably a good thing that I did go in head first."

Diegos: "You played under Roy Hodgson at Blackburn prior to his sacking earlier this season. He is being touted as a possible future Soccerroo coach. Do you think he has the qualities to lead the Soccerroos to the next World Cup and if he does get the job, do you think your chances of playing for the Soccerroos will improve?"

Filan: "I'm not sure about whether it will improve my chances of playing but I'm sure the ex-manager will do a good job if he gets the job. He has had a couple of other national teams and done well with them."

"Whether or not he wants to come down to Australia is another matter. To be honest, I think he might struggle with the Aussie sense of humour. He gets a bit intellectual at times so you'll all have to have your dictionaries on hand regularly. But other than that I think that he would do well."

Diegos: "Are Aussie players in England concerned that a Soccerroo

great job with the team since he took over."

"What's he like as a manager and does he spit as much as Alex Ferguson?"

Filan: "Fortunately he hasn't spat at me yet. I'm more than happy with him so far. He has done well for the club, very well in fact. He has come from a successful club and he possesses that arrogance about his management that will no doubt soon flow through the whole team."

Diegos: "Australia has a glut of world class goalkeepers vying for the prized, psychedelic Soccerroo keeper's shirt. You have to compete against the likes of Mark 'Bonza' Bosnich, Mark 'The Baby Giraffe' Schwarzer and Zeljko 'The Overgrown Cat' Kalac."

"Is it a case of John 'Fed Up' Filan when it comes to your aspirations to become the Soccerroos' next World Cup keeper?"

Filan: "Not really. The problem with Australian football is that it only has important competition once every four years in the World Cup. As a result a lot of the guys over here are more worried about their careers with their clubs and if they get picked to play with the Soccerroos it's a bonus. Unfortunately representing your country doesn't pay the bills week in week out. The main thing for me is my football career here but if I do get involved with the Soccerroos in the future, that will be great."

Diegos: "Mark Bosnich has had a couple of well publicized spats with English supporters behind his goal over the years. What is the funniest thing opposition supporters have said to you and have you thought about hitting them with the age old, Basil Fawlty, Nazi salute?"

Filan: "After seeing what Bosnich copped at Spurs and in the media, I've kept the old Nazi salute well and truly tucked away. The weirdest experience I've ever had was when I first signed at Blackburn. A lady came in at one of the club's signing sessions and got so excited that she took off her false leg and wanted me to sign it. The only problem was that it still had a shoe and stocking on it. You get



John Filan ... has signed a woman's false leg, with the shoe and stocking still on!!

bag, but I'll take it anyway."

Diegos: "Thanks John. Please a favour for the Diegos. When you deny Alan Shearer from close range in the fifth round FA Cup tie v Newcastle — can you stare into the nearest camera and yell 'that was for the Four Diegos' — we need the publicity?"

Filan: "Thanks Diegos. I'll see what I can do. Perhaps I'm might blow you some kisses to boot. Adios Amigos."

"The Four Diegos" are radio celebrities and soccer scribes on Melbourne's Stereo 97.4 FM

Saturday 10 am - 12 midday.

E-Mail 'The Diegos' on FourDiegos@bigpond.com

Until next time ... Adios Amigos!



John Filan with Dale White during his Wollongong days (91-92).

will stay out of. There have been a few suggestions about our parentage and stuff like that. But we're hanging in there and the boys are doing well."

Diegos: "Your performances for Blackburn Rovers are attracting rave reviews across England at present. It seems however, that the press and the fans are not the only ones doing the raving."

"Apparently you have sent Blackburn's former number one custodian, Tim Flowers stark raving mad, in that since his return from injury, your displays have kept him out of the team — so much so, that he has demanded a transfer from the club. You've spent a long time being number two keeper for a couple of clubs in the past. How does it feel to finally be 'The Man' and are you tempted to, perhaps, suggest to Tim that he should spend more time cleaning your boots and getting you cups of tea for a change?"

Filan: "That might be a good idea. At the moment I've got Tim running scared and I'm more than happy with that. It's a situation where one keeper has got to play and one misses out."

"Unfortunately it looks like he's not taking it that well and is stating publicly, that he wants to leave the club. I can't be worried about those sorts of things. I just want to play in the first team."

Diegos: "We all know how treacherous it is to be a goalkeeper, especially in England where players like Duncan Ferguson and Vinnie Jones get a pay rise if they claim a keeper's scalp. We Diegos nearly cried a couple of weeks ago when you literally fell on your head whilst going for a high ball against Sunderland

coach has not been appointed as yet?"

Filan: "It's a weird situation because when Terry Venables was appointed for the last campaign, there was a lot of hype and media attention focused on it here in England. Aussie football as a result was getting a lot of coverage. When he did leave the set-up in Australia, a lot of papers were asking about who was going to be the next manager."

Blackburn Rovers fans have, like many, a wry sense of humour, particularly regarding their local rivals Burnley. He are a couple from supporters' netsites ...

Three old football fans are in a church, praying for their teams. The first one asks, "Oh Lord, when will Rovers next win the Premier League?" God Replies, "In the next five years." "But I'll be dead by then", says the man.

The second one asks, "Oh Lord, when will Rovers win a European Trophy?"

The Good Lord answers, "In the next ten years".

"But I'll be dead by then", says the man.

The third one asks, "Oh Lord, when will Burnley reach the Premier League?"

God answers, "I'll be dead by then!"

A Rovers fan and a Burnley fan were sentenced to death by firing squad. The officer in charge asked the Burnley Fan if he had a last request. 'Yes' replied the Burnley Fan, I'm a keen Burnley Supporter, and I videoed the last game Burnley played. Could I watch the video before I die?

No Problem', replied the officer, I'll get the men to rig up a large screen, and you can watch it from here.

Then turning to the Rovers Fan, he asked 'And what about you, do you have a last request?'

'Yes', he replied, 'Shoot me first'.

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ANSETT AUSTRALIA SUMMER SERIES 1998/99

Round Ten

SASI PIRATES THROUGH TO GRAND FINAL IN THRILLER

SASI PIRATES	2
(Louisa Bisby 38, Sharon Black 90)	
NORTHERN NSW HORIZON	1
(Alison Forman 27)	

SASI Pirates will contest their third consecutive Ansett Summer Series grandfinal, winning 2-1 last Sunday in the most dramatic of circumstances to leapfrog reigning champions NSWIS Sapphires who faltered with a 1-1 draw to QAS Sting.

The pressure was on each of the sides to take maximum points, the Sapphires holding the slender one-point lead ahead of the Pirates going into the Sunday last match deciders.

Bottom-placed Northern NSW Horizon made things very difficult for the Pirates at Adelaide's Hindmarsh Stadium. Bouncing back from their heavy defeat the previous day, they really took the game to the favourites from the opening whistle and put pressure on the home side defence for the first three minutes of what was a physical contest.

SASI then fought back and had a penalty appeal

knocked back in the 4th minute after a player had seemingly been brought down inside the box. They were unlucky not to convert one of four dangerous chances in the next ten minutes, including a Kristy Moore header which was ruled offside, and a perfect Natalie Thomas cross which skimmed off the top of Jessica Halfpenny's head.

But Horizon weren't about to back down, and pushed forward again. They were rewarded with the opening goal in the 27th minute, something not in the Pirates' plans for the day. A Northern corner kick from the right found its way to Alison Forman on the edge of the 18-yard, the midfielder rising above her marker to head a looping ball towards goal. Goalkeeper Tracey Wheeler misjudged the high ball and it fell straight through her hands and in just under the crossbar.

Northern came close to doubling their lead with two more close opportunities in the next five minutes. SASI Pirates then responded to control play for the remainder of the half, and scored the welcome equaliser in the 38th minute. A Rebecca Morrison long throw-in towards goal came off the head of a defender and flew perfectly back for Louisa Bisby unmarked 15 metres to the left of goal.

The Victorians made no mistake with the finish, driving low inside the near post.

Again Northern came out firing after the break, dominating for the next 13 minutes, Tracie McGovern and Shelley Youman both with good chances to regain the lead. Then SASI returned to take their patch of possession, Black still off target with more of her numerous long range efforts.

Northern Horizon were setback with the loss of key midfielder Forman, stretchered off with a knee injury in the 74th minute. Four minutes later, Pirates' substitute striker Lia Matto appeared to be held back as she turned to face goal inside the box, but the referee waved play on.

Another four minutes gone and Matto provided a fantastic ball to free Thomas behind a square defence, but her chip flew wide of the left post as keeper Rebecca Perrett came off her line.

Time was ticking away and the Pirates' dreams with it, the score still level at 1-1. SASI's Black then unleashed a top shot on the turn from the edge of the box, Perrett getting the merest of fingertip touches and the ball hit the woodwork.

Then an incident of great concern. With four minutes of normal time remaining, Pirates' substitute Anna Ruotolo landed on her head after a heavy challenge, and suffered a suspected neck injury.

The stretcher was waved away and it was clear an ambulance would be needed to take her from the field. With tension already at an unbearable level, the referee almost created an explosive situation, signalling that he wanted to call the game to an end.

Discussions with several officials staved off any such idea, and the action was suspended for a full twenty minutes whilst Ruotolo was attended to.

Finally the game resumed and four minutes later, SASI Pirates were awarded a freekick 21 metres out slightly to the right of centre. Midfielder Black stepped up and under immense pressure struck the sweetest shot, the ball curling around the wall and high into goal off the left post. The stadium erupted in wild raptures, a sensational goal in sensational circumstances.

A nervous last three minutes, and the walls almost came crashing down again, the Pirates giving the ball away in midfield, and Dianne Alagich needing to race back from upfield to make a saving sliding tackle to prevent the shot on goal from inside the box.

When the final whistle ended the thriller for a 2-1 win, the Pirates then had to wait another ten agonising minutes for the final result from Brisbane before being able to confirm their grandfinal berth.

SAPPHIRES STUMBLE AT LAST HURDLE

QAS STING	1
(Alicia Ferguson 7)	
NSWIS SAPPHIRES	1
(Joanne Peters 60)	

Reigning champions NSWIS Sapphires stumbled at the last hurdle in the enthralling race to the grandfinal, managing only a 1-1 draw against QAS Sting in the must win Sunday decider at Brisbane's Lions Stadium.

The home side were missing the services of injured striker Lisa Dunne, plus midfielder Kim Revell who was ruled out for the whole weekend. Ashleigh Hewson was absent through suspension from the Sapphires' midfield.

Sting's Alicia Ferguson put an early dent in the Sapphires' plans, giving the Queenslanders the lead after just seven minutes.

Sonia Gegenhuber provided a great through ball up the right, and Ferguson slammed the ball home first time in stunning fashion from the right edge of the 18-yard, the keeper not even moving as the ball flew past into the

top corner of goal.

QAS' April Mann was unlucky not to stretch the lead, her two shots blocked on the line. The Sapphires fought back strongly to end the first half, but the home side defence held firm.

After the break, NSWIS had to push forward in attack, with time dwindling away and a goal behind. They enjoyed a promising spell, before Sting then enjoyed a good patch of their own.

In the 59th minute, Zoe Nolan combined well with Megan Bond resulting a great cross from the right. A Tammie Thornton flying header sailed just wide of the mark. From that narrow escape, the Sapphires mounted an instant break upfield and were awarded a freekick just outside the box. Joanne Peters bent the ball around the wall and into the top corner of goal for the much-needed equaliser.

NSWIS continued to push hard for the victory, and soon after, Julie Murray broke through, but her strike hit the post. The ball rebounded back out to Amanda Parker, but her shot was cleared off the line by Gegenhuber. QAS keeper Joanne Butland was called upon to make a couple more saves, and then the game petered out to a 1-1 draw.

stunning back flick with flew just wide of the mark.

QAS Sting retained their lead playing some solid aggressive football. A good display from both sides saw chances created and end to end action.

NSWIS Sapphires could see their season's work slipping away with little time remaining and still a goal down, but continued to battle on. QAS Sting remained confident of taking the result, until five minutes from the end, the Sapphires equalised. Alicia Cavanagh sent over a dangerous corner kick which eluded everyone in the 6-yard box and found its way into goal. The ball was hooked back clear out of goal, but the referee adjudged the ball had already crossed the line.

In a must-win situation, the Sapphires somehow pulled the result out of the bag in the last minute of play. A cross into the box was headed by the defence but not cleared and Joanne Peters sent the ball back into the crowded goalmouth.

Substitute Thea Slatyer was on the spot to force the ball home from very close range at the far post, her first ever national league goal and a crucial one to keep the Sapphires' hopes alive.

SAPPHIRES OUT OF JAIL

NSWIS SAPPHIRES	2
(Alicia Cavanagh 85, Thea Slatyer 90)	
QAS STING	1
(Megan Bond 5)	

NSWIS Sapphires got themselves out of jail with two late goals to retain their valuable one-point lead ahead of SASI last Saturday, snatching a 2-1 win over QAS Sting.

QAS Sting made the perfect start, taking the lead in the 5th minute to upset the favoured Sapphires. Sonia Gegenhuber crossed from the right, and Megan Bond finished in clinical style from just inside the 18-yard. Straight afterwards however, the Sting was set back with a hamstring injury to striker Lisa Dunne.

The Sting created a couple more good chances, before Sapphires Julie Murray was unlucky not to equalise with a

HALFPENNY CREATES HISTORY

QAS PIRATES	5
(Jessica Halfpenny 5, 20, 32, 62, 68)	
NORTHERN NSW HORIZON	0

SASI Pirates' striker Jessica Halfpenny created national league history, breaking the record for the most goals scored in a single match as she notched up all five classy goals for the Pirates in their 5-0 win over Northern NSW Horizon on Saturday.

Halfpenny opened her account after just five minutes. A brilliant through ball played from midfield saw Halfpenny race past her marker and calmly place the ball low past the outcoming keeper from 14 metres. Northern Horizon responded instantly, creating several dangerous chances over the next 13 minutes.

Fullback Rachael Alley came closest, driving at goal through a crowded goalmouth, but keeper Tracey Wheeler got down well for the reflex save.

Twenty minutes in and Halfpenny doubled their lead. A fantastic ball from outstanding defender Dianne Alagich on the half-way line looped over Northern's last defender and bounced perfectly into the path of Halfpenny, running in on the blind side.

Again the youth international slotted the ball home

from the edge of the box.

Halfpenny racked up her hattrick goal in the 32nd minute. A neat ball from deep from the boot of Kristyn Swaffer sent Sharon Black free well inside the box to the right of goal. With everyone expecting the shot, Black squared to the unmarked Halfpenny, who this time drove the ball low inside the near left post from 15 metres.

Halfpenny came close with two further close chances in the next four minutes, but the scoreline remained at 3-0 at the break.

Northern Horizon pushed hard in attack and controlled play for the next 12 minutes. Jamie Moran's 15 metre attempt was shut out with a great diving save by SASI keeper Tracey Wheeler.

Halfpenny's fourth was added in the 62nd minute, Black the provider with an inviting high ball 14 metres out from goal. The sharpshooter went up for the ball along with her marker, and the looping header found its target in the top left corner of goal.

Three minutes later, a Black long range freekick hit the post and out, before Halfpenny scored the record fifth goal shortly after.

A clever short ball was slipped through by Black into the 18-yard box and Halfpenny drove past the keeper low inside the left post from 14 metres.

BRING ON THE GRAND FINAL

The Canberra Eclipse versus SASI Pirates grandfinal this Sunday looks to be a tantalising match-up, certain to provide

plenty of goalmouth action and skilful attacking football.

The Eclipse contest their first ever grandfinal, and in fact their best ever previous placing is fourth in the two previous seasons. They have been the surprise packet of the season, surprising even themselves, producing some stunning results despite an early high injury toll. Their often inexperienced young lineup answered the challenge and knocked over their more favoured opponents in the first half of the season, without the injured Traci Bartlett, Sarah Cooper, Amy Wilson, Dior Foxhill and Caitlin Mun oz.

Then after the Christmas break with almost everyone back on deck, the Eclipse finished where they'd left off, taking an impressive 21 points of the 24 on offer during that period to finish certain premiers before the season had even ended.

The team with the highest number of goals was led by

the amazing goalscoring feats of Lisa Casagrande, who recorded a record four hat-tricks over the course of the season and 16 goals in total.

Yet the Eclipse may have to overcome more hurdles in the grandfinal, injuries to Bartlett, Casagrande, and Amy Taylor leaving the Matildas trio all in doubt for the big match.

The SASI Pirates will need no motivation in their quest for the title. The South Australians have plenty of grandfinal experience having played on the two previous occasions, but the memories of losing twice will see them fight with all the passion they can muster. Going down 2-1 in the inaugural 1996/97 grandfinal against QAS, then losing 3-1 to NSWIS last season, they will not want to see this one slip by against Canberra.

The Pirates have played somewhat of a patchy season, falling in and out of form, but have hit their straps at the business end of the season. They have by far the best goal difference, as well as the best defensive record, and are only three goals behind Canberra in the scoring stakes.

So will it be the young fearless first-timers to lift the trophy this Sunday evening, or the battlehardened two-times runners-up to finally break through?

SUMMER IS... ERICSSON CUP

next round

Friday 26 February

Newcastle Breakers v Adelaide Sharks
Breakers Stadium

Saturday 27 February

Brisbane Strikers v Melbourne Knights

Suncorp Stadium

Marconi v Gippsland Falcons

Marconi Stadium

Sunday 28 February

Wollongong Wolves v Northern Spirit

Brandon Park

Perth Glory v Canberra Cosmos

Perth Oval

UTS Sydney Olympic v South Melbourne

Belmore Sports Ground

Carlton v Sydney United

Optus Oval

Bye: Adelaide City

Please note, these fixtures are supplied by Soccer Australia, and are correct at time of printing. Please check local guides in case of changes. We accept no responsibility for any late changes to fixtures, or incorrect information supplied to us.

RESULTS ROUND 21

Melbourne Knights 2
Northern Spirit 3

Adelaide City 4
Wollongong Wolves 4

Carlton 5
Brisbane Strikers 2

South Melbourne 2
Marconi 0

Gippsland Falcons 0
Newcastle Breakers 1

Sydney United 3
Perth Glory 4

Bye Adelaide Sharks

Canberra Cosmos v UTS Sydney

Olympic played last night

(after Soccer Weekly went to press).

TABLE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
South Melbourne	20	13	4	3	39	21	43
Perth Glory	20	11	3	6	43	24	36
Sydney United	20	11	3	6	35	26	36
Northern Spirit	20	11	2	7	27	26	35
Adelaide City	20	10	4	6	33	22	34
Carlton SC	20	9	4	7	41	29	31
Sydney Olympic	19	9	4	6	35	25	31
Brisbane Strikers	20	8	4	7	29	31	28
Marconi Fairfield	19	8	3	8	31	36	27
Newcastle Breakers	20	7	5	8	19	26	26
Wollongong Wolves	19	5	6	8	29	35	21
Adelaide Sharks	19	5	5	9	27	31	20
Gippsland Falcons	19	4	5	10	12	32	17
Melbourne Knights	19	4	4	11	22	33	16
Canberra Cosmos	19	2	2	15	14	39	8





ERICSSON CUP

WEEK 21
21-22 FEBRUARY
1999

ARNIE AND SLATS DO IT AGAIN

MELBOURNE KNIGHTS **2**
Kelic 41 Kutlesovski 80
NORTHERN SPIRIT **3**
Watkins 34 Arnold 46 Slater 77
At Knight Stadium, Melbourne

By Dwyght Tuffnell

Northern Spirit continued its push for a spot in the top six with a valuable 3-2 win over Melbourne Knights on Saturday night.

Spirit's win, in which they also missed a penalty, was all the more important given that it was one of the Knights' best performances of the season.

The Knights had fallen 3-1 behind but were given a glimmer of hope with Ice Kutlesovski scoring in the 80th minute.

Spirit held out though, to secure three vital points.

Coach Graham Arnold was happy to have left Knights Stadium with the win.

He was also another coach not pleased with the surface at the ground.

"We gave away the ball too easily and too often. I'll put that down to the ground, it's difficult to play football out there but I was happy with the way we played in patches" Arnold said.

"It was bumpy out there and it's so hard you can't wear studs and because it's so hard it doesn't even take a rubber stud."



Knights coach, Josip Biskic, said that the pitch's condition wasn't helped by the fact that there was a Victorian Premier League game played on it the night before.

A slow beginning to the game was ignited just after the half hour mark with new Spirit signing, Matthew Bingley, teeing up Arnold with an opportunity to strike from an angle. Arnold's shot beat Joe Didulica, but cannoned back off the post.

A short time after the visitors did take the lead when Matthew Langdon neatly cut back a cross from the byeline for Daniel Watkins to poke the ball over the line.

The Knights replied four minutes before half time. Skipper Ante Kovacevic stole the ball in midfield and passed to Ivan Kelic whose low, powerful drive found the corner of the net.

A couple of defensive lapses from Ivan Jolic gave the Knights an ordinary start to the second half.

First, just a minute in, he inadvertently flicked on a Robbie Slater free kick to the far post where Arnold was on hand to head in.

Then, five minutes later, he gave away a penalty when he bundled over Langdon inside the area.

Fortunately for Jolic, Didulica came to his rescue with a superb save from Slater's spot

kick. The Knights were perhaps a little lucky that the kick wasn't ordered to be re-taken by referee Lou Prospero as



Matt Langdon ... Man of the Match.

one or two of their players appeared to encroach in the area before Slater had taken his shot.

The Knights came back strong but could only threaten with shots from distance, although Zeljko Susa did come awfully close with a right foot effort

from the edge of the area.

Slater made his penalty miss with Spirit's third goal in the 77th minute.

Luke Casserly picked out the Spirit captain with a precise cross from the right hand side and Slater, totally unmarked, headed into the corner with little difficulty.

Kutlesovski then beat Henderson after seeing off a couple of Spirit defenders with ten minutes remaining but couldn't go on from there and get the equaliser.

Biskic was pleased with the Knights display, saying it was their best of the season.

"The boys kept going after being behind, both teams played really well, I can only be disappointed because we didn't take any points" Biskic said.



CHAMPAGNE SOCCER FROM TWO OF THE BEST

SYDNEY UNITED **3**
Vrkic 16, Sterjovski 23, Berry 66
PERTH GLORY **4**
Boutsianis 37, 89, Edwards 57, Garcia 65
At Edensor Park, Sydney

By John Economos

Seven goals, two red cards, spectacular saves by both goalkeepers, plus end to end action, were the ingredients that went into a superb Soccer cocktail mix last Sunday night at Edensor Sports Centre.

In a champagne match, a previously doomed Perth Glory made a dramatic second half comeback to ultimately down a luckless Sydney United 4-3.

With 21 minutes left of play and with the scoreline reading 3-3, rookie referee Jeremy Blaney reduced both sides to ten players, marching Glory's sweeper Danny Hay as well as United's robust midfielder Jacob Burns for an incident near the touchline. Burns appeared to have been very unfortunate to be dismissed.

In the first 33 minutes Sydney United could have led by five goals instead of the two that were hoisted on the scoreboard. United attacked with such fierce and savage fury as it repeatedly stormed Perth's flat-footed and dispirited lines.

Only former international goalkeeper Anthony Franken stood between a complete annihilation of Perth Glory and survival. The fabulous saves made by Franken not only avoided a total rout, but allowed his team to regroup at halftime and in the second session even go ahead and miraculously even win the match.

Despite Franken's first half top class display between Perth's uprights, the Glory's ultimate 'Man Of The Match' was none other than heroic left footed midfielder Con Boutsianis. 'Boutsie' not only scored a valuable brace, but his goals seemed to have been executed with impeccably planned timing.

With United totally storming the Glory in the first half hour, yet only leading by 2-0 and seemingly on the verge of completely annihilating the Westerners,

Boutsianis shocked the home side in the 37th minute with a goal. A violent left footed screaming 25 metre free kick that dipped into the top right corner of the target, Boutsianis' goal had the life-saving desired affect that automatically seemed to halt, then deflated, the home side's up till now, constant fury.

If that wasn't enough, with a minute left on the clock and the scores locked at 3-3, that man Boutsianis again heroically surfaced to score the miraculous winner.

The fresh and explosive substitute Vas Kalogeracos, twisted and busted his way up the left flank to fire in a perfect cross to the back stick. Boutsianis made a desperate late run into the box from the right to meet and power this cross with a bullet downward header into the target.

In the 5th minute United defender Peter Bennett crossed wide to the right for fellow defender David Barrett to cross back in to the far post to midfielder Jacob Burns. Burns' left footed volley however skimmed Perth's horizontal.

In the 12th minute action aplenty erupted inside Perth's box as first Mile Sterjovski saw his close ranged drive kicked off the line by Gavin Wilkinson, then Joel Griffiths in slamming back the rebound also saw his effort cleared off the line, this time by Scott Miller, to deny United first blood.

Finally in the 16th minute Perth's defences cracked open as a Ante Moric corner from the right saw giant stopper Joe Vrkic head glanced into the far corner.

Seven minutes later United doubled the scoreline. From a throw-in some magnificent ball artistry by the twisting 18 year old striker Griffiths in centre-box, saw him brilliantly lay on a lovely ball to Sterjovski to drill a flat drive into the net for his 14 goal in the NSL, three behind the League's top scorer, Pablo Cardozo.

An intercept by Griffiths in the 33rd, saw him again 'feed' Sterjovski but the latter's shot was magnificently blocked by Franken. Franken again later denied Barrett a goal.

Seconds before the break Burns fed Berry on the right and well inside the box, but his lobbed shot cleared the crossbar.

With United leading 2-1 at the break, the second session saw a totally rejuvenated Glory steam out onto the pitch with far more vigour in their tackling and far more enterprise in their attacks, gallantly inspired by halftime substitute Gianfranco Circati, plus a more involved former international Alistair Edwards.

In the 49th minute Circati exploded a 30 metre and on-target rocket, but United's goalkeeper Mike Gibson, sharply dived to his right making a world class save.

Bobby Despotovski's clever cross in the 57th minute and fired in from the right flank, was not correctly cleared by United which allowed the highly experienced striking Edwards to flash in and hammer into the target the equaliser at 2-2.



Con Boutsianis ... how brilliant is this man?

In the 65th minute Glory hit the lead for the first time in the match when Scott Miller set up energetic midfielder Michael Garcia to score from the right side, but within seconds United had balanced the books at

MATCH STATS...

Crowd: 3,728

Referee: Lou Prospero

Melbourne Knights: Didulica, Nastevski, Jolic, Kovacevic, Kelic, Kiratzoglou, Pondeljak, Susa (Magdic 82), Reda, Banini, Kutlesovski.

Northern Spirit: Henderson, Rudan, Casserly, Slater, Arnold, Watkins (Zane 60), Bilokapic, Cunico, Langdon (Moss 81), Enes, Bingley.

Yellows:

Melbourne Knights: Susa 23, Banini 42, Jolic 51, Northern Spirit: Bingley 12, Zane 70, Enes 89

Votes Player of the Year:

3: Langdon (Spirit)
2: Kelic (Knights)
1: Arnold (Spirit)

"I'm really pleased. The boys never dropped their heads, sooner or later the results will come."

Arnold said that the team was well on track to make the finals in their first season.

"That result for us was so important for us tonight" said Arnold. "We're now on 35 points and depending on other games, we could be six points in front."

"We've got four home games to go and I set a goal at the start of the year for 42 points to get us into the six, we need another seven from the remaining eight games."

MATCH STATS...

Crowd: 4,211.

Referee: Jeremy Blaney.

Sydney United: Gibson, Barrett, Kupresak, Plesa, Vrkic, Bennett, Burns, Moric, Berry, Sterjovski (Day 54), Griffiths (Mitchell 71).

Perth Glory: Franken, Trajkovski, Deans, Hay, Wilkinson (Circati 46), Garcia, Strudwick (G. Naven 79), Boutsianis, Miller, Despotovski (Kalogeracos 84), Edwards.

Reds:

Sydney United: Burns
Perth Glory: Hay both off in 69.

Votes Player of the Year:

3: Boutsianis (Glory)
2: Griffiths (United)
1: Franken (Glory)

3-3. Substitute striker Nathan Day crossed from the right for midfielder Berry to head in from the back post.

'Birthday boy Barrett' in the 75th minute crossed into Glory's box to his player-coach and substitute, David Mitchell. The off-balance Mitchell vainly tried to steer the ball into the target, very narrowly going wide of the base of the far post.

Almost right on time Boutsianis scored Glory's fourth and winning goal.

In this fabulous match, best for United were Griffiths, Barrett, Kupresak and Berry whilst for the Glory, Boutsianis, Franken, Edwards and Traykovski stood out.

A semi-satisfied Perth Glory coach Bernd Stange later stated: "I was proud of my team but not in the first half as we were heavy legged, played like a Youth side, but at halftime in the dressing rooms it was like a thunderstorm. I didn't change tactics for the second half but we improved immensely."

But a dejected United coach David Mitchell couldn't accept that his team allowed this one to slip their grasp, stating: "We should have buried them in the first half but allowed them to score against the run of play. I don't think we deserved to lose it but in the end it was us that threw it away."

"Anthony Franken made two crucial first half saves. Now we have Carlton next weekend, another tough match."



ERICSSON CUP

WEEK 21
21-22 FEBRUARY
1999

THE ARCHIE THOMPSON SHOW!

CARLTON SC **5**
Thompson 7, 46, 79, 93, Stergiopoulos 95
BRISBANE STRIKERS **2**
Hughes 49, Harris 63
At Optus Oval, Melbourne

By Ralph Barba

A four-goal haul from newly acquired striking sensation, Archie Thompson, guided Carlton to a thrilling 5-2 win over Brisbane Strikers at Optus Oval on Sunday.

Blues coach, Eddie Krncevic made good his promise that heads would roll after the previous week's embarrassing loss to Northern Spirit with big guns, captain — Andrew Marth, goalkeeper—Dean Anastasiadis, and defenders — David Cervinski and Con Anthopoulos, all axed from the starting line up.

"Making wholesale changes was certainly a risk but we badly needed to add spark to our play," Krncevic explained.

And spark the team it did.

The opening stanza was all Carlton with midfielder, Lubo Lapsansky outstanding in the clinches. It was his sharp strike in the 6th minute that could only be parried away by Strikers' keeper, Clint Bolton. The loose ball calmly tucked away by the alert Thompson to make it 1-0.

Brisbane's response was immediate and proved that these days Kosmina's outfit is made of sterner stuff.

Its wide men, Jeremy Harris and Des Hughes started to exploit the space behind the offensively minded Carlton duo, Marco Bresciano and Joe Tricarico.

Harris in particular was proving a handful with his

clever runs and menacing crosses. Hews and Harper failed to convert gilt edged chances in the 18th and 23rd minutes respectively, letting off the hook a Carlton team that had become fragile in possession.

Strikers' dynamo, Kasey Wehrman, had become the dominant player on the park, with Carlton being reduced to flashes of brilliance from Olyroo, Simon Colossimo who in the 42nd minute, narrowly shot wide after a magnificent 60 metre run.

On the stroke of half time, the game took a dramatic twist, with Strikers' defender, Chris Zoricich given his marching orders after his second bookable offence on the probing Moreira. Lapsansky curled the resultant free kick onto the head of Thompson who met it sweetly at the near post to make it 2-0.

Brisbane however struck back immediately with Des Hughes glancing a near post Meredith free kick, past Carlton keeper, Cagalj to make the score 2-1, and all to play for in the second half.

Concerted Brisbane pressure after the interval made a mockery of their one man disadvantage.

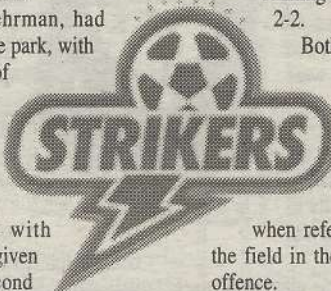
A Meredith strike parried away by the busy Cagalj, proved a precursor to the visitors' best chance to get back on level terms. An intelligent Wehrman through ball in the 59th minute, put Harper through with only the keeper to beat. Cagalj's contact with the Brisbane goalace was

controversially judged illegal by referee, Brett Hugo, who instantly pointed to the penalty spot. Wehrman's resultant penalty strike was superbly beaten away by Cagalj to protect the Blues' precarious lead.

The home team's fortune finally ran out in the 64th minute, when the persistent Wehrman made amends for his earlier penalty miss, supplying a pass to the hard running Harris, who converted to make the score 2-2.

Both sides went in search of maximum points with Carlton finally breaking the deadlock after another clinical Thompson finish in the 79th minute following good combination play by Tricarico and Colossimo.

The game was reduced to 10 a side when referee, Hugo sent Carlton's Colossimo from the field in the 85th minute after his second bookable offence.



John Kosmina ... elected to criticise Carlton after his 5-2 loss to the Blues.

MATCH STATS...

Crowd: 2,502

Referee: Brett Hugo

Carlton SC: Cagalj, Stergiopoulos, Colossimo (sent off 85), Douglas, Bresciano (Marth 73), Atkinson (Ouliaris 78), Moreira, Lapsansky, Thompson, Tricarico, Della Rocca (Anthopoulos 58).

Brisbane Strikers: Bolton, Zoricich (sent off 43), Laybutt, Harper, Wehrman, McLaren, Hews, Harris (Tolenaere 66), Meredith, Hughes (Knipe 79), Davidson.

Yellows:

Carlton: Cagalj
Brisbane: Wehrman

Votes for Player of the Year:

3: Thompson (Carlton)
2: Lapsansky (Carlton)
1: Wehrman (Brisbane)

In a tense finish, Carlton substitute, Anthopoulos became the unlikely architect of his team's hard fought win. In the 92nd minute, it was his run and combination with Moreira that lead to the game clinching fourth goal by Thompson. In the 95th minute another Anthopoulos 50 metre pass split the visitors' defence and fell to the running Stergiopoulos, who scored the Blues' fifth with aplomb.

Although happy with his team's overall performance, Strikers outspoken coach, John Kosmina had an uncomplimentary shot at the opposition saying: "I didn't think much of Carlton." On the match referee Brett Hugo, Kosmina queried "Is his surname Ego or Hugo?"

Carlton coach Eddie Krncevic dismissed the comments saying, "He didn't think much of Carlton? Last time I looked at the scoreboard it was 5-2 for us".

TOO EASY FOR THE CHAMPIONS

SOUTH MELBOURNE **2**
Trimboli 16, Coveny 35
MARCONI FAIRFIELD **0**
At Bob Jane Stadium, Melbourne

By Dwyght Tuffnell

Reigning champions South Melbourne leapt seven points ahead of the rest of the Ericsson Cup with a comfortable 2-0 win over Marconi Fairfield on Sunday.

Two first half goals gave South another home and although Marconi made it difficult for them at times, they were never in the contest.

Marconi's side, which has so many changes to it in recent weeks, again reshuffled their line-up, bringing in new signing Robbie Hooker for his first start of the season.

Clearly lacking match fitness, Hooker could only see out the first half.

Like a few other occasions this season, South won the points without doing anything spectacular.

"We won the game in the first 45 minutes" said coach Ange Postecoglou. "We were pretty comfortable in the second half but we could have played it a bit smarter and maybe got another goal or two."

"But when the game was there to be won in the first half, the boys did the job so I can't complain."

South skipper, Paul Trimboli, gave South a 16th minute-lead, heading in Vaughan Coveny's flick on from Steve Panopoulos' corner.

Michael Curcija looked what to have been a good goal ruled out in the 26th minute after referee Mark Shield adjudged Trimboli to have fouled Marconi 'keeper Ante Covic.

South's second was a real special, made by a superb cross from defender Con Blatsis.

Blatsis, out wide on the right, crossed with the outside of his right foot to pick out Coveny who finished with a downward header.

Marconi were lucky not to fall 0-3 behind, three minutes before half time when they somehow managed to clear their

lines following an amazing goal mouth scramble in which Trimboli and George Goutzioulis had had shots at the goal but Vlado Zoric finally cleared the ball to safety.

Blatsis had been impeccable in the first half until the 44th minute when he stretched and missed a through ball intended for Kris Trajanovski.

Trajanovski, with Marconi's best chance of the first half, dithered on the opportunity and eventually toe-poked the ball straight into the arms of Michael Petkovic.

Though South had survived that scare, Blatsis, who had overstretched when trying to clear, had to be substituted with a hamstring injury.

Blatsis, who had already spent much of the season injured, looks set to spend a few more weeks on the sideline with the latest of a catalogue of ailments.

The second half was less eventful, South hardly breaking out of second gear and Marconi having no penetrative attacks save for a couple in the dying minutes of the game.

Marcus Phillips set up substitute Sean Babic in the 84th minute but he clipped his shot over the bar and Francis Awaritefe headed a Brad Maloney cross wide with the game well and truly over.

Visiting coach, Frank Farina, said that South had

exploited Marconi's lack of height in defence to maximum effect.

"We've been in trouble recently with height at the back since losing (Mark) Babic and (Dominic) Longo and South just knocked ball to the far post and we struggled. We conceded two goals from it" said Farina.

"We couldn't do much about it. They troubled us from nearly every set piece they had."

"Everyone has their problems through the year."



Vaughan Coveny ... the brilliant Kiwi added to his tally against Marconi.

MATCH STATS...

Crowd: 9,136

Referee: Mark Shield

South Melbourne: Petkovic, Iosifidis, De Amicis, Oric, Blatsis (Liparoti 44), Panopoulos, Coveny, Trimboli (Polak 81), Curcija (Anastasiadis 68), Goutzioulis, Tsekis.

Marconi Fairfield: Covic, Gibson, Phillips, Kim, Maloney, Farrah, Awaritefe, Renaud (Z.Babic 68), Trajanovski, Zoric, Hooker (Smith 46).

Yellows:

South Melbourne: Liparoti (77)
Marconi Fairfield: Maloney (34), Smith (74)

Votes for Player of the Year:

3: Iosifidis (SM)
2: Tsekis (SM)
1: Farrah (MF)

Unfortunately we've had most of them across the back line. It's been a bit difficult."

Despite this, Farina is remaining very optimistic.

"It would have been nice to come down here and get some points, but I'm still very confident we will get the necessary points to make the top six."

Postecoglou said that he was hoping that the injury to Blatsis wasn't too serious.

"It's a bit of a set-back but we're getting players back. (Steve) Panopoulos is getting stronger and Goran Lozanovski and David Clarkson aren't too far away."

"We haven't missed a beat regardless of the problems we've had. Even today when Blatsis came off and Robert Liparoti came on there was no difference, sometimes these performances go unnoticed, but certainly not by me."



ERICSSON CUP

WEEK 21
21-22 FEBRUARY
1999

BREAKERS SNATCH VALUABLE AWAY POINTS

GIPPSLAND FALCONS 0
NEWCASTLE BREAKERS 1
Wilson 81
At Mobil Park, Gippsland

By Damian Tripodi

Despite a less than convincing performance, the Newcastle Breakers defeated the Gippsland Falcons by one goal to nil in their NSL encounter at Mobil Park.

A goal scored at the 85th minute by Mark Wilson, gave the Breakers the precious three points required to keep them in the hunt for a final six spot.

The goal was the result of a speculative shot and a goal keeping mistake.

Falcons keeper Bojo Jevdjovic miscalculated the path of the bouncing ball, misread it, in desperation stuck his foot out, only to helplessly let it go past him.

The undermanned Falcons had two injury time goals disallowed for alleged infringements on the Breakers keeper Bob Catlin.

Missing from the Falcons line up were midfielders Clayton Bell, Will Hastie and Brian MacNicol, who were forced to stand out due to accumulation of demerit points through yellow cards received.

Their replacements, however, youngsters Ben Cassar, Andy Savage and Andy Vargas gave excellent accounts of themselves. Cassar, whose name is synonymous with Gippsland football, although starting for the first time, showed the poise and maturity of a more seasoned

campaigner.

The Gippslanders went on the field like a "house on fire", taking total command of the game from the very first minute. They displayed an excellent work rate and did everything right with good built ups and good cohesion. The only thing they were unable to do was find the net.

The home side mounted a series of well calculated build ups emanating from the defence, with Lev Osman in devastating form, delivering some excellent balls to the midfield. The whole team, in fact was doing good, creative work.

All the good work, however, became undone in attack as the tall timber Newcastle defenders cleared all attempts, with Shane Pryce being the main protagonist.

As the Falcons vehemently moved forward, the Novacastrians had no choice but to play defensive football. In the first half they only managed one shot at goal, by their main goal scorer John Buonavoglia, which resulted in a routine save by Jevdjovic.

At the other end, Bob Catlin's goal was constantly peppered by the Gippslanders with Marko Perinovic, Sasha Becvinovski, and Andy Vargas coming perilously close to scoring.

In the second half the tempo lifted, the game opened up and became an action packed affair.

Newcastle came out with renewed vigour and now was doing much of the attacking. Neither side, however was prepared to succumb to the other, resulting in some spectacular pieces of play.

Nevertheless, with both teams trying so hard and the players becoming tired, it was inevitable that mistakes would be made and in this case, a goal keeping mistake

cost the home side the game.

Just as it appeared that the contest was demed to finish as a draw, Wilson's goal five minutes prior to the end changed the slant of the game with the visitors "shutting the doors" and closing themselves in defence.

The Falcons pushed for the equaliser, with substitute Peter di Iorio adding some impetus in attack, however the fortunes on this occasion were with Newcastle.

At the conclusion of the game Newcastle coach Lee Sterrey admitted to being dispirited with the football played by his team, but



Lee Sterrey's Breakers can still make the six.

MATCH STATS

Crowd: 1,735

Referee: Con Diomis

Gippsland Falcons: Jevdjovic, Anderson, Hopkins, Osman, Hutchinson, Perinovic, Vargas, Pula, Savage, Becvinovski, Cassar, Di Iorio, Canosa, Katz.

Newcastle Breakers: Catlin, Pryce, Roberts, Sanderson, McManus, Ritchie, Wilson, Buonavoglia, Umlil, Shannon, Haythornthwaite, Owens, Bauer, Yoon.

Yellows:

Gippsland Falcons: Hutchinson 22, Perinovic 35, Cassar 75

Newcastle Breakers: Sanderson 42, Haythornthwaite 68, Shannon 70, Buonavoglia 89

Votes for Player of the Year:

3: Pryce (NB)

2: Catlin (NB)

1: Vargas (GF)

was happy with the three points.

When questioned about the defensive style of play, Sterrey stated that "maybe we were a bit defensive, but the objective was to block out Perinovic. The coach also stated that it is a great effort for any team to go away from Gippsland with three points.

Gippsland coach Stuart Munro, whilst disappointed with the loss, was praiseworthy of his charges, particularly the younger players. "The teenagers played extremely well" said the coach, "Ben (Cassar) was terrific and he has a big future.

A goalkeeping mistake cost us the game." Munro also referred to some bad refereeing decisions.

GOALARAMA MAMA!

ADELAIDE CITY 4
Veart 11, 82, Mori 70, 85
WOLLONGONG WOLVES 4
Surjan 15, Horsley 24, Chipperfield 36, Karavatakis 88
At Hindmarsh Stadium, Adelaide

By Margaret Bowden and Donald Campbell

'Unbelievable' is the only word to describe this match. The Wolves devoured the Zebras 4-1 in the first half. The Zebras came back to life to win the second by the same margin.

Eight goals, two penalties, a send off, two shots off the crossbar — what more could you want?

Stand-out 88.5 Coast FM Player of the Match Scott Chipperfield shredded the City defence for the full 90 minutes. The goal hungry Wolves, with Antony Surjan, Esala Masi, Paul Reid, Noel Spencer, Matt Horsley, Sebastian Sinozic and ex-Zebra Michael Brooks backed him up superbly in their hunt for Zebra blood. Red was the only colour on the pitch in the first half.

The Zebras seemed asleep, even though they scored first when Brad Hassell took a quick free kick 25 metres out on the right.

Keeper Les Pogliacomini, who thwarted City's chances for the rest of this half, was well out of goal to organise a wall when the ball sailed past him toward the left post.

Carl Veart, who had a nightmare first half, awkwardly tapped it into the net for 1-0 to City.

The Wolves then went berserk, scoring just four minutes later. Angelo Costanzo upended Chipperfield in the penalty area. Surjan stepped up to take a classic penalty, low into the right corner of the net — 1-1. Nine minutes



Damian Mori ... two-goal star.

later Chipperfield whipped the ball across from the left to set up Horsley charging in unmarked on the right — 2-1 Wolves. City keeper Jason Petkovic could do nothing but watch.

Twelve minutes later Chipperfield was at it again, gaining possession in the midfield, dodging past five Zebras and shooting from 15 metres. Brilliant — 3-1 Wolves. Masi almost achieved the same feat a minute later, but Costanzo saved with a crunching tackle.

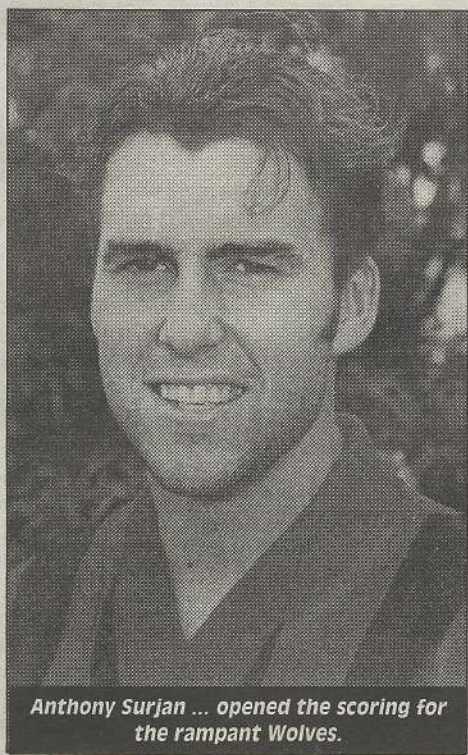
What a turn around. The next 45 minutes was played at a frenetic pace, with City taking control. Four yellow cards and a send off indicated both teams' desperation to win.

Bradley Armour, playing his 100th NSL game, gave City the aggressive oomph it needed, constantly threatening to score and setting up Damian Mori.

Two minutes in and are rejuvenated Veart sent a perfect pass through for him to shoot from close range. The ball rocketed off the underneath of the crossbar.

Horsley was then denied by the City crossbar! The next chance fell to Veart, who raced into the box. Sinozic dispossessed him with the tackle of the game. Then it happened.

Robbie Stanton misjudged a clearance, Mori pounced, the ball slammed into the top of the net — 3-2. Possession seasawed, but there was no stopping City. Mori raced up the centre of the pitch and slotted the ball



Anthony Surjan ... opened the scoring for the rampant Wolves.

MATCH STATS...

Crowd: 4,546 official

Referee: Gerry Connolly

Adelaide City: Petkovic, Ivanovic, Tobin, Talladira, Mori, Veart, Costanzo, Hassell (Armour 35), Terminello, Sabljak Kim.

Wollongong Wolves: Pogliacomini, Stanton, Sinozic, Horsley, Brookes, Surjan (Dimoski 70), Chipperfield, Spencer, Huxley, Masi (Karavatakis 42), Reid (Langan 84).

Yellows:

Adelaide City: Veart 49

Wollongong: Karavatakis 54, Spencer 74, Brookes 77

Red:

Adelaide City: Costanzo (87)

Votes for Player of the Year:

3: Scott Chipperfield (Wollongong)

2: Angelo Costanzo (Adelaide City)

1: Damian Mori (Adelaide City)

to Veart unmarked on a slight angle to the right. Veart finished clinically 3-3.

Three minutes later a mighty roar arose from Hindmarsh. Mori finished a slow City build up from the back, scoring from a Costanzo cross — 4-3 Zebras. But the Wolves were still hungry.

In an ironic twist of fate, ex-Zebra Brooks slammed the shot at goal that Costanzo saved brilliantly with his hand! **PENALTY! REDCARD!**

Steve Karavatakis made no mistake from the spot — 4-4 with two minutes left.

Silence again descended on Hindmarsh, as both sets of supporters saw their three points disappear.



National Youth League

Compiled by Roy Hay and proudly sponsored by Prestige Wedding and Function Centre,
Vivid Expressions Photography and Argon Video Productions

SOUTHERN DIVISION

Round 21

South Melbourne	2	Albury Wodonga	0
Gippsland Falcons	1	Carlton	2
VIS	2	Melbourne Knights	3

Bulleen Inter v VIS

(To be arranged)

League Ladder

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
South Melbourne	17	11	3	3	31	15	36
Carlton	15	10	2	3	43	17	32
VIS	15	8	3	4	30	24	27
Melbourne Knights	16	6	3	7	29	31	21
Gippsland Falcons	16	6	2	8	24	26	20
Bulleen Inter Kings	14	5	2	7	19	24	17
Albury Wodonga	15	0	1	14	14	53	1

Round 22

Saturday 27 February

Albury Wodonga v Gippsland Falcons,
(Myrtleford, 6 pm)

Sunday 28 February

Carlton v VIS,
(Optus Oval, 3 pm)
Melbourne Knights v South Melbourne,
(Knights Stadium, 5 pm)
Bye v Bulleen Inter

LEADING SOUTHERN SCORERS

Andrew Mashoian	South Melb	12
Jovanco Novacevski	Carlton	6
Scott McDonald	VIS	6
Deniz Ekicic	Carlton	5
Tony Ouliaris	Carlton	5
Erhan Bayraktar	South Melb	5

Southern Summary ... South Melbourne made and missed a barrowload of chances in its two-nil win over Albury Wodonga.

Andrew Mashoian got the break through after 15 minutes. John Tambouris took the Albury defence with him as Mashoian slid the ball under keeper Sam Chambers. Chambers had an exceptional game, making a series of point-blank stops.

Robert Tudor should have equalised in 42 minutes, when he slid the ball wide of Chris Jones' post from a through ball by Javier Martinez. Four minutes after the break Jones had to touch over a blast from Robert Tudor again. Just short of the hour mark, Mustafa Mustafa whipped over a cross and Erhan Bayraktar finished it off to give Souths a two-nil cushion. Late in the game two players were sent off but neither side could score thereafter.

Melbourne Knights and the VIS played out a classic at Grange Reserve which finished with the Knights on top by the odd goal in five. Damon Collina opened for the Knights after three minutes, then Michael Bosevski made it two, only for Angelo Mtsiopoulou to pull a goal back in 34.

Scott McDonald scored the equaliser for the VIS on the hour mark, but Hrvoje Matkovic restored the Knights' advantage four minutes later.

The VIS had its chance to draw level again but a missed penalty in 83 minutes condemned it to defeat, but the game left the fans happy. This was a Round One, catch-up game.

Carlton recorded a two-one away win at Mobil Stadium over the Gippsland Falcons. Alex Josifovski gave the Blues a flying start in 9 minutes, but Tony Pardo equalised on the stroke of half-time. Deniz Ekicic replied four minutes later for Carlton which had control from then on.

Bulleen v VIS(Round 20) will be rearranged.

Northern Summary ...There were three catch-up games played this week. On Tuesday the AIS beat Wolves 3-1 in the last match left over from Round One.

Elias Dimourtzidis continued his rich scoring form with two goals and Joshua Kennedy got the other. Chad Bishop's penalty was the Wolves' only reply.

Also on Tuesday, the Newcastle Breakers beat NSWIS 3-0. Paul Wheeler got a double, and Saoud Umilil the third, in what was a Round 11 catch-up game.

Then on Saturday Wollongong Wolves Colts and the ACT Academy of Sport played an exciting three-all draw at Brandon Park in a match postponed from Round 16.

Tzolikidis, Popovski and Broad were the scorers for the Colts, while Julienne, Veljanovski, and Daniel Raad scored for ACTAS with the result in doubt to the very end.

In Round 20, the AIS had a four-nil win over Queensland Academy.

Defenders scored the first two goals, in the shape of Ljubo Milicevic and Johnny Cvetanovski. Then Kevo Guleserian and Elias Dimourtzidis got in on the act. Daniel Vasilevski and Wayne Shroj caught the eye for the AIS.

Newcastle Breakers beat Northern Spirit Colts by four goals to one. Tony Bauer, Paul Wheeler, Josh Maguire and Peter Juchniewicz did the damage for the Breakers.

Sydney United Youth had a four-nil win over its Colts side. Greg Collins got a double, and Daniel Kukucka's goal was his fourteenth of the season. Josip Moric scored the fourth.

On Sunday, Marconi Fairfield Colts drew three-all, but no details were available at time of writing.

Marconi Fairfield beat Sydney Olympic Academy nine-nil at Wentworth Park, with hat-tricks for Luke Tomich and Joe Bruni being the highlights.

Michael Beauchamp, Mark Hagger and and own goal made up the total.

New South Wales Institute of Sport beat Northern Spirit by three goals to nil, starting with a Simon Catanzaro effort following a goalmouth scramble in eight minutes. It was not till 82 minutes that the NSWIS scored its second when Naulhel Arrarte converted. The Institute had Mark Byrnes sent off, but substitute Anthony Doumanis made it three in 87 minutes. In a tight game keeper Matthew Nash was outstanding once again for the Institute, while the Spirit's youth team pays the penalty for so many of its regulars being called up for senior duty.

NORTHERN DIVISION

Round 21

AIS	3	Wollongong Wolves	1
(Round 1 catch-up game)			
Newcastle Breakers	3	NSWIS	0
(Round 11 catch-up game)			
AIS	4	QAS	0
Wollongong Wolves Colts	3	ACTAS	3
(Round 16 catch-up game)			
Northern Spirit Colts	1	Newcastle Breakers	4
Sydney United	4	Sydney United Colts	0
Marconi Fairfield Colts	3	Wollongong Wolves	3
Sydney Olympic Academy	0	Marconi Fairfield	9
NSWIS	3	Northern Spirit	0

Monday 22 February

ACTAS v Sydney Olympic

Bye v Wollongong Wolves

League Ladder

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
AIS	20	14	5	1	78	13	47
Newcastle Breakers	20	13	4	3	45	19	43
Sydney Olympic	18	12	2	4	48	20	38
NSWIS	18	11	3	4	42	15	36
Northern Spirit	19	11	2	6	32	20	35
QAS	18	11	1	6	50	25	34
Marconi Fairfield	15	9	5	1	46	12	32
Wollongong Wolves	17	10	1	6	35	19	31
Sydney United	19	8	4	7	37	27	28
Marconi Fairfield Colts	18	5	3	10	16	30	18
ACTAS	19	4	3	12	29	47	15
Sydney United Colts	18	4	0	14	18	55	12
Northern Spirit Colts	18	2	3	13	17	76	9
Sydney Olympic Academy	18	1	3	14	13	59	6
Wollongong Wolves Colts	19	1	3	15	13	82	6

Round 17

Sydney United v Marconi Fairfield,
(Edensor Park, 6 pm)

Round 22

Friday 26 February
Newcastle Breakers v Wollongong Wolves Colts,
(Breakers Stadium, 5.45 pm)

Saturday 27 February

QAS v NSWIS,
(Suncorp Stadium, 4.30 pm)
AIS v Sydney United,
(AIS Soccer Field, 7 pm)
Marconi Fairfield v Northern Spirit Colts,
(Marconi Stadium, 5 pm)
Sydney United Colts v ACTAS,
(Edensor Park, 5 pm)

Sunday 28 February

Wollongong Wolves v Northern Spirit,
(Brandon Park, 4 pm)
Sydney Olympic v Sydney Olympic Academy,
(Belmore Sports Ground, 4pm)
Bye v Marconi Fairfield Colts

LEADING NORTHERN SCORERS

Mark Hagger	Marconi	16
Daniel Kukucka	Sydney United	14
Russell Miner	QAS	12
Simon Catanzaro	NSWIS	9
Kevo Guleserian	AIS	9
Anthony Mondello	Marconi Colts	8
Anthony Bauer	Newcastle Breakers	8
Chad Mansley	Newcastle Breakers	8
Paul Tuturevski	Wollongong Wolves	8

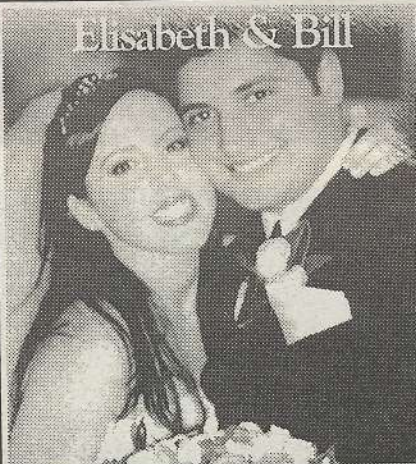
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SOCCER WEEKLY



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NSW SUPER LEAGUE

STILL MAGIC MILE

By Daniel Giorelano

BANKSTOWN3
FAIRFIELD1

Bankstown City has bounced back to the winners circle following their 3-1 victory over the previously undefeated and league new boys, Fairfield City Bulls at Jensen Park on Sunday.

In a superb team effort, following last week's 5-1 loss, goals from Michael Hawrysuik, who canceled out Martin Drienc first half goal for the Bulls, Robert Issa and Zoki Adioski, led the Lions to their second victory of the season.

The first half was a scrappy and tight affair with both teams wrestling for dominance of the midfield, which was eventually dominated by the home side and in particular, the inspirational 39 year old, Mile Todorovski who was far and away the best player on the park.

Bankstown coach, Sakib Lovic praised the team and in particular Todorovski after the game. "Our players are brilliant especially Mile."

"He is 39 but has the stamina of a 21-year-old. He loves soccer and he was very instrumental today."

Neither team settled into early into the game, that included almost a dozen yellow cards and an ever-increasing level of tension between the two sides.

The first real attacking move from Fairfield didn't arise until half way into the half with a sweeping move down the right side, which ended when Marc Hoenselaars placed his headed over the bar.

Fairfield took the lead in the 40th minute against the run of play with a candidate for goal of the season by Martin Drienc, who was the best player for the defeated Bulls side.

The goal stunned both the players and the crowd as Drienc chipped the goalie from almost 25 yards out and only a matter of feet from the right hand sideline, leaving Bankstown goalie Leo Premutico stranded off his line.

On the stroke of half time, the Bulls should have doubled their lead through Matt Borg, who was given a great through ball by Salvatore La Rocca. Borg attempted to round goalkeeper Premutico who showed courage to dive at the feet of Borg and deny the striker a certain goal.

The game opened up in the second half which fell into the hands of the Lions, playing their aggressive 4-3-3 formation, who equalised in the 58th minute through Michael Hawrysuik who

slotted home after a slick build up by teammates Drienc and Borg.

The goal stunned the away side who never recovered from the equaliser.

It wasn't long that the Bulls went behind for the first time in the game with a goal by replacement Robert Issa after teammate Nabil Codmani pounced on a mistake by a Fairfield defender to run into the box and flick the ball to Issa who scored.

Fairfield lacked experience and after going behind, they fell apart conceding a third in injury time with a goal by Zoki Adioski, who turned his defender inside out and then blasted his shot wide of the advancing keeper from 12 yards out, securing a well deserved victory for Bankstown. The loss was Fairfield's first for the season.

Bankstown coach, Sakib Lovic said after the game that he never doubted his team would bounce back after last weeks loss even though they were trailing at half time.

"Fairfield are an excellent side and a strong side. They came into the match with two wins but we did a job on Borg And La Rocca and it paid off."

Bankstown: Premutico, Josevski, R Luksic, D Luksic, Grozdanovski (81 Abi-Arrage), Trposki(c) (56 Issa), Hawrysuik, Todorovski, Adioski, Lozevski (85 Brikovski), Codmani

Coach: Lovic Sakib

Fairfield: Pupovac, Drienc(73 Giometti), Mandic (53 Suzor), Zabetakis, La Rocca, Falzon, Hoenselaars (67 Iocca), Borg, Bourke, Treharne, Vrankovic.

Coach: Joe Watson

Referee: Congitis

Meanwhile over in Blacktown, Stuart Cleary was once again the thorn in the side of Sutherland Sharks in the NSW Super League fixture at the Gabbie Stadium last Saturday evening. In the final game of last season he blasted four past the sluggish Sharks' defence and he put them to the sword again in this game.

Scoring both goals in the Demons' 2-0 victory he could well have had another three with a bit of luck in front of goal and a better bounce of the ball.

Blacktown coach Brian Brown was philosophical after the match stating, "It was a bit disappointing after last week's magnificent effort, but Josh Jackett's performance showed great promise."

SUPER LEAGUE

FIRST GRADE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	DIF	PTS
Macarthur Rams	3	3	0	0	10	5	5	9
Blackburn City D	3	2	0	1	6	3	3	6
Bankstown City L	3	2	0	1	9	8	1	6
Canterbury M'ville	3	1	2	0	8	4	4	5
Bonnyrigg WE	3	1	1	1	8	8	0	4
Fairfield Bulls	3	1	1	1	6	6	0	4
Leichhardt Tigers	3	1	1	1	4	4	0	4
Central Coast	3	1	1	1	5	7	-2	4
Parramatta Eagles	3	1	1	1	3	5	-2	4
Ryde City	3	0	1	2	4	7	-3	1
Eastern Suburbs	3	0	1	2	3	6	-3	1
Sutherland Sharks	3	0	1	2	2	5	-3	1

UNDER 21

	P	W	D	L	F	A	DIF	PTS
Macarthur Rams	3	3	0	0	8	1	7	9
Bonnyrigg WE	3	3	0	0	7	0	7	9
Blacktown City D	3	2	0	1	7	4	3	6

Fairfield Bulls	3	2	0	1	4	2	2	6
Eastern Suburbs	3	2	0	1	5	4	1	6
Canterbury M'ville	3	1	1	1	5	4	1	4
Central Coast	3	1	1	1	5	5	0	4
Parramatta Eagles	3	1	1	1	5	6	-1	4
Sutherland Sharks	3	1	0	2	2	6	-4	3
Leichhardt Tigers	3	0	1	2	4	8	-4	1
Ryde City	3	0	0	3	3	7	-4	0
Bankstown City Lions	3	0	0	3	0	8	-8	0

UNDER 18

	P	W	D	L	F	A	DIF	PTS
Canterbury M'ville	3	3	0	0	12	5	7	9
Bankstown City Lions	3	2	0	1	9	5	4	6
Macarthur Rams	3	2	0	1	5	2	3	6
Ryde City	3	2	0	1	5	4	1	6
Leichhardt Tigers	3	2	0	1	3	3	0	6
Parramatta Eagles	3	1	1	1	3	2	1	4
Blacktown City D	3	1	1	1	4	4	0	4
Bonnyrigg WE	3	1	1	1	5	6	-1	4
Central Coast	3	1	0	2	5	6	-1	3
Sutherland Sharks	3	1	0	2	3	8	-5	3
Eastern Suburbs	3	0	1	2	4	6	-2	1
Fairfield Bulls	3	0	0	3	1	8	-7	0

Ollie's not finished yet!

By John Economos

Scott Ollerenshaw, Australia's former international striker, firmly believes that his 31 year old body still has a couple of years left to play top Soccer, if he can get his left ankle right.

Having been enticed by Graham Arnold to return Australia and play for the NSL's fledgling club side the Northern Spirit late last year, 'Ollie' was looking forward to making his comeback into the National League.

After having played for the past four years in the Malaysian National Soccer League with Sabah, and lately with Negeri Sembilan, 'Ollie' gladly signed a

two year contract with the Northern Spirit.

But during the NSL's off season, Ollerenshaw underwent an operation on his damaged left ankle, something that he had put off for the past four years.

"It was to clean up some damaged cartilage pieces," he told Soccer Weekly.

"The ankle had hampered me for over four years and I kept playing by using cortisone regularly which wasn't rectifying the real ailment."

"So I came back to Australia to sign for the Spirit but first underwent an operation on it. However when they opened up the ankle they found the cartilage had worn away completely and what was left was just bone grinding on bone."



"Because the ankle wasn't responding well to all my laborious post-op therapy, I felt that the correct thing to do was to hand in my contract at the Spirit and go away till I got it fixed right. It was the honest thing to really do."

"Since then, I've had acupuncture treatment which has helped a lot."

"So rather than sit around doing nothing, I decided to go and play in the NSW Super League with my old mates John Koch and Craig Moffitt."

"Ryde's coach Les De'Celis and his assistant Richard Miranda signed me up for this season."

"In the opening match which we lost 3-1 to Fairfield Bulls, I copped a kick on the ankle which put me out for the next match. But I played last weekend."

"I firmly believe that I still have a couple of good seasons left in me to make it back into the NSL as soon as I regain my full fitness," stated Ollerenshaw.

The always brave and honest Ollerenshaw, confessed: "If my body doesn't recover well enough for me to again be able to play in the NSL, I would be very keen to get involved in coaching."

Well perhaps that is some time off judging from Ollie's game on the weekend. He scored both goals for Ryde City in the 2-2 draw with Eastern Suburbs.

NSW SOCCER FEDERATION

SUPER LEAGUE

Results

Round



Three

BLACKTOWN CITY S Cleary 28, 58m	2	SUTHERLAND SHARKS 0
BONNYRIGG WE P Richardson 55m J Macino 20, 23m, C Luff 8m	4	PARRAMATTA EAGLES G Bard 46m
BANKSTOWN LIONS M Hawrysuik 55m, R Issa 67m Z Adioski 88m	3	FAIRFIELD BULLS M Drienc 20m
RYDE CITY S Ollerenshaw 75, 88m	2	EASTERN SUBURBS P Pullicino 6, 47m
EASTERN SUBURBS S McCombe 34m	1	LEICHHARDT TIGERS C Bedtzaric 12m, S Boudaher 87m
LEICHHARDT TIGERS M Talcevski 65m, C Landsowne 90m	2	MACARTHUR RAMS R Lloyd 40m, T Whidett 50m, A Macerola 70m
CANTERBURY M'VILLE J Nikas 25, 85m	2	CENTRAL COAST P Preston 31m, N Bym 62m

NSW SOCCER FEDERATION

SUPER LEAGUE

ROUND



FOUR

Saturday 27th February

Blacktown City Demons vs Central Coast

Gabbie Stadium, 6:00pm

Macarthur Rams vs Ryde City

Lynwood Park, 7:00pm

Sutherland Sharks vs Leichhardt Tigers

Seymour Shaw Park, 7:00pm

Sunday 28th February

Fairfield Bulls vs Canterbury Marrickville

Ninevah Field, 6:00pm

Eastern Suburbs vs Bonnyrigg White Eagles

Wentworth Park, 5:00pm

Parramatta Eagles vs Bankstown City Lions

Melita Stadium, 5:00pm

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PREMIER LEAGUE



PREMIER LEAGUE SUMMARY

SOUTH DANDENONG 1 FAWKNER 1

By Kevin Christopher

A win to either South Dandenong or Fawknor would have seen them leapfrog into the top half of the table, but after a game that got better the longer it went, both teams had to settle for a point after a 1-1 draw.

The home side were getting good drive down the left hand side early on, with Agron Tarevski having a fine game, although the quality of crossing wasn't always to his team's advantage.

The best chances of the first half fell to Fawknor in the final six minutes. Robert Runje's attempted long ball was charged down by Enzo De Santis allowing Santo Emmanuele to go through one-on-one with Chris Roche who saved brilliantly at his feet.

A minute later he denied Ivan Duzel as well, after the Fawknor midfielder had exchanged passes with Emmanuele.

The second half provided much better entertainment for a crowd which had by now swelled to over the thousand mark.

Just two minutes into the second period, Emmanuele was allowed to cut inside from the left and unleash a shot which took a cruel bend thanks to a challenge from Ahmet Gurpinar, leaving Roche groping fresh air.

South Dandenong responded admirably however, creating a series of good chances. Valiant Mujaj went close twice in close succession and Viktor Memeti shot straight at Maurice Gonzalez.

The best chance of this sustained spell of pressure fell to Ciaran Feehan, who skied a header over the bar with Gonzalez exposed by a beautifully weighted cross from Memeti.

By this stage Fawknor looked to have held on to all three points, but with seven minutes remaining Paul Ferrante was sent off for a foul on substitute Festim Zekirija.

South Dandy got their equaliser when coach Fadil Muriqi's free kick from the left fell nicely for Zekirija who thrashed it through a wall of players and into the net.

South: Roche, Runje (Mujaj), Gurpinar, Moodie, Tarevski, Memeti, Villani, Pelja, Van Egmond (Muriqi), Feehan, Mezensof (Zekirija).

Blues: Gonzalez, Tramontana, Grimaud, P.Ferrante (sent off), Schipano, V.Ferrante, Bordignon (Alexopoulos), De Santis, Emmanuele, Duzel, Simsek (Di Sauro).

Referee: Robert Caminiti

Votes: 3-Gonzalez (FB), 2-Villani (SD), 1- Moodie (SD).

ST ALBANS 2 PRESTON LIONS 1

By Daniella Raco

In a game played before a crowd of around 1,500 on Friday night at Knights Stadium, Steve Rastocic's St Albans Saints continued their revival with a hard fought 2-1 win over Preston Lions.

The Saints, fresh from a stirring win over Altona East last week, recorded their second straight win to collect a further three valuable points.

Having attracted a stream of quality signings with NSL experience, the Saints couldn't be denied thinking they were at home at a ground familiar to many of them.

The team appeared to dominate proceedings despite going into the break on level terms after a scoreless and lustreless first session.

St Albans continued to control the game in the second half, the defining moment of the game coming in the 48th minute.

A strong performance by Harry Karl saw him win possession, turn his marker and slot the ball past Luca Acevski in the Preston goal.

Preston looked likely to penetrate from the counter-attack when a through pass by Sasho Slavevski found Warren Spink but his explosive drive went hammering into the far post.

Both sides were edged to ten men after send-offs late in the half. Slavevski (Preston) was left seeing red after chopping the legs from under Ilija Dragicevic and Mick Colina (St Albans), was similarly given his marching orders for dissent.

It looked briefly as if a Preston revival might be in the air, a 63rd minute goal coming courtesy of half time substitute Tony Ujgunovski.

St Albans continued their relentless attacking thrusts, eventually grabbing some more breathing space mid-way through the second half with Karl continuing to create problems for the Preston defence, notching his second goal of the game from Ivan Razov's through ball.

Saints: Vunderl, Raspudic, Colina (sent off), Karl, Dragicevic, Bacak (Movic), K.Razov, Clarica, Sianidis, Saric, I.Razov (Vidakovic).

Lions: Acevski, Ognenovski, Spink, Filipovski, Simsek (Ujgunovski), Stojcevski (Burlak), Emovski, Graham, Smirnis, Slavevski (sent off), Markovski.

Referee: Dominic Barba

Votes: 3- Sianidis (StA), 2- Karl (StA), 1- Spink (PL)

S'VALE WE 1 WESTVALE 1

By Patrick Tomson

Springvale White Eagles were able to salvage their first point of the season against a fiery Westvale side on Sunday at the Serbian Sports Centre.

After an uneventful first half which saw Springvale take the lead, the game turned into an all out tussle, culminating in a magnificent 30 metre drive by Westvale's player-coach Phil Stubbins to leave honours even at full time.

With both defences standing firm in the initial passages of play, a barrage of long balls were tried by both sides in order to break the deadlock.

The White Eagles were to prove this method successful after scoring in the 24th minute with their first opportunity.

Zlatko Mihajlovic held off his defender superbly to chest a long ball into the path of Igor Mandic who made not mistake from just inside the 18 yard box.

The second half proved to be a more fervent affair, with some crunching tackles breaking up possession. Referee Alan Contini issued six out of the games seven yellow cards in the second half which highlighted each teams desperation for maximum points.

Westvale thought they were due a penalty in the 59th minute when George Karkaletsis' drive was unintentionally handled by Springvale's William Armour. The loud appeals were turned down and yellow cards shown for Westvale's persistent few.

In a bizarre off the ball incident, referee Contini sent Springvale's Sinisa Cohadzic off for an apparent second bookable offence. After some deliberation the referee retracted the card and allowed the player to continue.

Among the confusion in the following minutes, Stubbins stalked his way through the midfield and let fly with a 30 metre drive. The 69th minute goal found the back of the net after Springvale's 'keeper Robert Brian was unable to deflect the shot far enough.

White Eagles: Brian, Calomino, Armour, Cohadzic, Culibrk (Milenkovic), Styczen, Z.Mihajlovic, Nikolic, Mlinar, Rikanovic, Mandic.

Westvale: Acteson, Brown, Zach, Hasler, Sevin, Timotheou, Goutzioulis, Richards (Stubbins), Pender, Karkaletsis (Gerl), Armstrong.

Referee: Alan Contini

Votes: 3- Pender (W), 2- Mandic (SWE), 1- Zach (W)

MELB RAIDERS 4 ALTONA EAST 0

By George Koukeris

In their last game at Partridge Reserve, Melbourne Raiders went out with a bang, scoring four goals in an impressive victory over Altona East Phoenix.

In 96 minutes of football, the Phoenix managed only one decent attempt on goal.

By half time, the Raiders were 3-0 up against an opposition that simply wasn't even challenging.

The first sign of Altona's demise occurred within the first five minutes as the Raiders unleashed a string of attacking raids that resulted in the second goal of the season for midfielder David Iacovitti, when he fired into the top corner from 25 metres.

Ten minutes later Nick Cuculevski scored the first of his two goals with a quick interception in front of goal and a precise finish.

Joe Corallo found the net after an impressive display of coolness as he rounded three defenders and placed a shot allowing no chance for John Chalamandaras.

In the 56th minute, Cuculevski wrapped up the game for the Raiders when he headed in Iacovitti's cross.

What should have been a very pleasant victory for the Raiders ended in controversy when referee Hakan Anaz issued a second yellow card to Corallo for apparently committing a foul on Giovanni De Amicis three minutes before full time.

Raiders: Raponi, Boschini, Kitanovski (Grganovic), Anastasiou, Iacovitti, Angelovski, Slifkas, Gasparini (Soufi-Sabbagh), Cuculevski, Corallo (sent off), El Kersh (De Propertis).

Phoenix: Chalamandaras, R.Antoniadis, Salpingidis, Kapulica, De Amicis, T.Antoniadis (Verikakis), Groidis, Bartol, Papadopoulos (Kappadakis), Angelos, Donnelly.

Referee: Hakan Anaz

Votes: 3- Cuculevski (MR), 2- Iacovitti (MR), 1- Raponi (MR)

SHARKS AND KINGS ON FIRE!

ALTONA MAGIC 0 PORT MELBOURNE SHARKS 5

By Milan Ninovic

Altona Magic fell to their fourth consecutive loss of the season on Saturday night, crashing 0-5 at home to a rampant Port Melbourne Sharks.

Peter Kakos, who is quickly proving to be the find of the season, continued his impressive start to life in the Premier League with a hat-trick.

The loss ended a miserable week for Altona. Chris Taylor had resigned as coach a few days earlier.

Kakos notched his first in first half stoppage time when he lobbed Magic 'keeper Darren McGrath.

His second came when a poor defensive error by Tom Markovski presented him with a chance from three metres.

John Pappas got into the act in the 84th minute, scoring after being set up by Evis Heath's clever back-heel.

Kosta Caimakamis grabbed the Sharks' fourth, superbly volleying in from the edge of the penalty area.

Kakos completed his treble right at the death, capitalising on a rebound after McGrath had stopped a Caimakamis shot.

Magic: McGrath, Ristevski, Micevski, Bizimovski (Bozinovski), T.Markovski, Nedza (Bogdanovski), Vasilevski, Velkovski, Ashton, Sapazovski (Cergovski), Petrevski.

Sharks: Cooper, Knezevic, Pappas, Latinopoulos, Vargas, Heath, Kakos, Tsaltas, Tsirtis (Jackson), Caimakamis, Fak.

Votes: 3- Kakos (PM), 2- Tsirtis (PM), 1- Tsaltas (PM)

SUNSHINE GEORGIES 0 BULLEEN INTER KINGS 3

By John Rigas

Bulleen Inter Kings outclassed an inexperienced Sunshine Georgies outfit on Sunday, scoring three second half goals to win 3-0.

Sunshine were under the guidance of experienced defender John Kanesoulis, who is a caretaker role, following the resignation of Anthony Cassar last week.

Bulleen had an impact on the scoreboard after 55 minutes when a long range effort by Danny Gnjdic beat Steve Wardle in the Sunshine goal.

Four minutes later, Vlad Babic found the back of the net with a shot on the turn from close range.

Things could have been made difficult for the reigning champions had two shots, in the 66th and 81st minutes from Sunshine striker Alfonso Opazo, been on target and not hit the crossbar.

Babic notched his second goal in the 71st minute when he latched on to a rebound after the ball had come back off a post.

Six minutes later Babic was in the action again, this time for the wrong reason.

Babic saw red when sent off after tangling with Georgies youngster Francisco Vera. He is the fourth Bulleen player to be sent off in the opening four rounds of the competition.

Georgies: Wardle, Bot (Sacco), Rozanitis, Kanesoulis, Debono, Vera, Hermosilla, Kindtner, Opazo, Stojilkovski, Elvin (Stojanovski).

Kings: Keogh, Valentis, Stojcevski, Everetts, Della Rocca, Mazzini, Babic (sent off), Gnjdic, Sherifovski, Grbac (Guglielmi), Rusmir (Collina).

Referee: Robert Incetes : 3- Della Rocca (BK), 2- Everetts (BK), 1- Mazzini (BK)

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ROUND 3 DETAILS (PLAYED LAST MONDAY NIGHT)

Bulleen Inter Kings 2 (Everetts, Babic) - Springvale White Eagles 1 (Mlinar)

Votes: 3- Styczen (SWE), 2- Everetts (BK), 1- Nikolic (SWE)

Westvale 0 - South Dandenong 2 (Runje, Pelja)

Votes: 3- Runje (SD), 2- Roche (SD), 1- Goutzioulis (W)

ROUND 4

St Albans Saints 2 (Karl 2) - Preston Lions 1 (Ujgunovski)

Altona Magic 0 - Port Melbourne Sharks 5 (Kakos 3, Pappas, Caimakamis)

South Dandenong 1 (Zekirija) - Fawknor Blues 1 (Emmanuele)

Springvale White Eagles 1 (Mandic) - Westvale 1 (Stubbins)

Sunshine Georgies 0 - Bulleen Inter Kings 3 (Gnjdic, Babic 2)

Melbourne Raiders 4 (Cuculevski 2, Iacovitti) - Altona East 0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Port Melbourne Sharks	4	4	0	0	15	2	12
Melbourne Raiders	4	2	2	0	8	3	8
Bulleen Inter Kings	4	2	2	0	8	4	8
Bentleigh Greens	3	2	1	0	9	1	7
Green Gully Cavaliers	3	2	1	0	7	5	7
Preston Lions	4	2	0	2	7	4	6
St Albans Saints	4	2	0	2	5	8	6
Altona East	4	2	0	2	4	8	6
South Dandenong	4	1	2	1	5	4	5
Fawknor Blues	4	1	1	2	8	7	4
Sunshine Georgies	4	1	0	3	3	8	3
Westvale	4	0	2	2	5	12	2
Springvale White Eagles	4	0	1	3	3	7	1
Altona Magic	4	0	0	4	1	15	0

ROUND 5 FIXTURES

Sunday February 28

Bentleigh Greens v Fawknor Blues - kick off 6pm at Kingston Heath Reserve

Altona East v Green Gully Cavaliers - kick off 6pm at Paisley Park

Preston Lions v Melbourne Raiders - kick off 6pm at Goodyear Stadium

Port Melbourne Sharks v St Albans Saints - kick off 6pm at Anderson Reserve

Springvale White Eagles v South Dandenong - kick off 6pm at Serbian Sports Centre



Monday March 1

Bulleen Inter Kings v Altona Magic - kick off 8:15pm at Veneto Club

Westvale v Sunshine Georgies - kick off 8:15pm at Green Gully Reserve VicHealth



**SW GLOBAL GAME SPONSORED BY THE MARCONI
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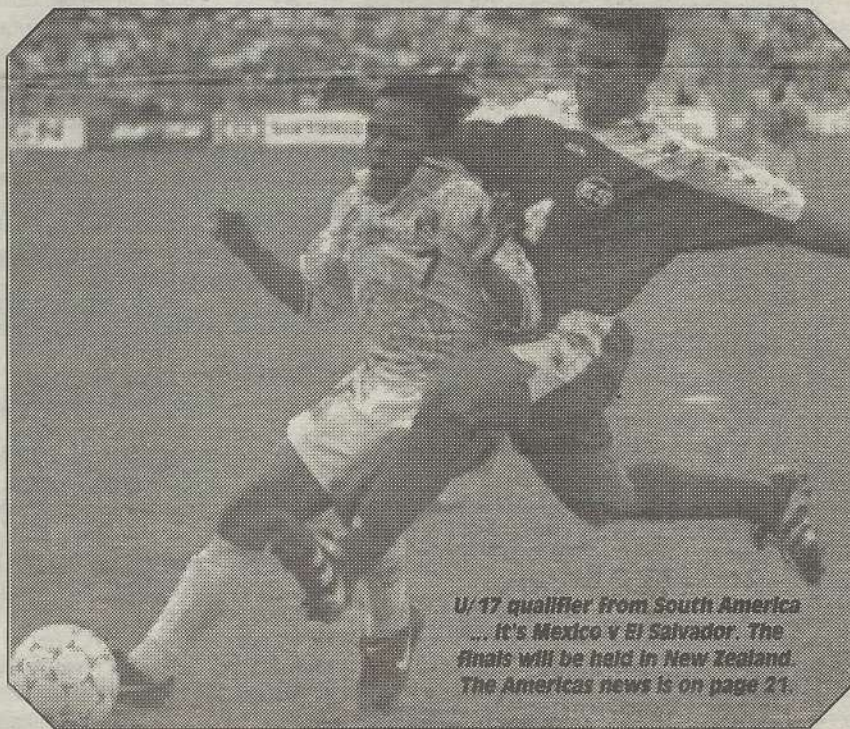
Inter's Ventola and Cannavaro of Parma. Italian page is on 24.



FIFA'S Sepp Blatter announcing the groups for the Women's World Cup. See our interview with Julie Murray in this issue.



Arsenal's Nwanku Kanu playing against Man Utd midweek. UK pages start on 27.



U/17 qualifier from South America ... It's Mexico v El Salvador. The finals will be held in New Zealand. The Americas news is on page 21.



Marseille v Toulouse ... another ballhead shot from the French League.



Dutch masters ... Barcelona's De Boers and Patrick Kluivert after their demolition of Real Madrid. The week in Europe starts on page 25.

Compiled by

AMERICAS

Soccer Weekly

WORLD INDOOR SIX-A-SIDE BECOMES A REALITY

A new indoor soccer league is to start this summer and redefine the concept of road trips, with teams in the United States, Mexico and England.

The World Indoor Soccer League will cover more

than 7,000 miles and eight time zones — from Sacramento, Calif., to Sheffield, England.

The league was tentatively formed in December as a partnership between the North America-based Premier

Soccer Alliance and the English Professional Indoor Football League.

Details and the arduous travel schedule were agreed to last week.

The U.S. teams are in St. Louis, Dallas, Houston, Phoenix, Sacramento and Portland, Ore. An expansion team was announced for Salt Lake City, with another club expected to go to Anaheim, Calif.

The Mexican team is in Monterrey and the English teams are in London, Sheffield, Newcastle and Manchester.

The WISL will be divided into North American and European divisions. North American teams will play 32 games against the English teams, 16 on each side of the Atlantic.

The European games will be played from July 17 to Aug. 8, and the North American teams will play at home from Aug. 21 to Sept. 19.

It would be great if Australia could be involved in such a tournament, we need all the international competition we can get.

Claudio Pizarro and Andres Mendoza scored and Peru beat Ecuador 2-1 on Wednesday night in friendly match used by both sides as preparation for the Copa America.

Pizarro's 28th-minute goal, off a header from Roberto Palacios opened the scoring and Mendoza scored the game winner three minutes into the second half, beating defender Marlon Ayovi.

Peru dominated the first half before Ecuador tried to rally on Kleber Chala's goal in the 68th minute.

Ecuador Squad: Jose Cevallos, Augusto Poroso, Renan Calle (Valencia), Alberto Montano, Omar de Jesus Borja, Marlon Ayovi, Edwin Tenorio, Hector Carabali (Maldonado), Alex Aguinaga, Eduardo Hurtado, Nicolas Asencio (Chala).

Peru Squad: Juan Flores, Jorge Soto, Juan Reynoso, Mario Gomez, Miguel Rebozo, Jose Pereda, Gregorio Bernales, Erik Torres, Roberto Palacios, Claudio Pizarro, Andres Mendoza (Waldir).

Referee: Roger Zambrano, Ecuador.

Argentine World Cup coach and ex-star defender Daniel Passarella said he was hopeful of reaching an agreement to take over at Atletico Madrid.

"Nothing has been agreed yet," Passarella told Argentine radio. "We've still got a lot to talk about."

"At this moment I'm not Atletico coach but I'm hoping we can work something out."

Passarella resigned as Argentina's coach after last year's World Cup when his side reached the quarter-finals.

He has been linked with a number of clubs since his departure but has turned down all offers.

Atletico president Jesus Gil confirmed that he is interested in bringing in Passarella as a replacement for Arrigo Sacchi, who resigned.

"He's our number one priority," Gil told Spanish television station TeleMadrid.



Martin Palermo, voted the best player in South America in 1998, with his prize.

MEXICAN KEEPER CAMPOS IN KIDNAPPING ORDEAL

Mexico's keeper Jorge Campos' life was thrown into turmoil last week with the news that his father had been kidnapped in Acapulco.

"I insist that the main thing in this case is that they respect the life of my father," Campos was quoted in the sports daily Ovaciones.

Campos, the goalkeeper for UNAM Pumas and the Mexican national team, was with "El Tri" for the exhibition Carlsberg Cup in Hong Kong when his 65-year-old father, Alvaro, was abducted on Wednesday.



Keeper Campos during France 98

Police in Acapulco said they couldn't comment on the case until the family filed a complaint. But there appeared to be unusually heavy police activity in the streets of Acapulco.

Local residents said Alvaro Campos was generally well-liked and was known for helping promote local soccer. He had recorded television commercials for the governing Institutional Revolutionary Party before this month's state election.

As many as eight heavily armed men seized Alvaro

Campos, known to friends as El Nono, shortly before 2 p.m. Wednesday at a sports field named for his son in a southern suburb of Acapulco, near the city's airport.

"El Nono told all of us, his family and his friends, that he had received some phone calls since December in which they threatened to kidnap him, but he said those were jokes," said Ricardo Jimenez Anaya, a friend of Alvaro Campos.

Mexico's wave of kidnappings for ransom have become one of Mexico's most feared crimes in recent years, with victims ranging from middle-class farmers to the president of Mexico's largest bank.

Some have been blamed on common criminals, some on guerrilla bands and many on current or former police — one reason victims' families often fear to seek help from officials.

Campos, a flamboyant goalkeeper also known for his brightly colored uniforms and for playing forward on occasion, is one of Mexico's most famous figures. He played in both the 1994 and 1998 World Cups and

spent the last three seasons shuttling back-and-forth playing for clubs in both U.S. Major League Soccer and the Mexican first division.

He caused a stir in U.S. Major League Soccer last season when he left the Chicago Fire shortly before they entered the playoffs and went on to win the MLS Cup title.

Campos, who was traded to the Fire before last season after two years with the Los Angeles Galaxy, reported late because of his commitment to Pumas and then went to France for the World Cup.

By the time he returned to Chicago, he had lost his job to Zach Thornton and played only sporadically until going back to Mexico. He is under contract to MLS and is expected to return to the Fire after the Mexican league season ends in May.

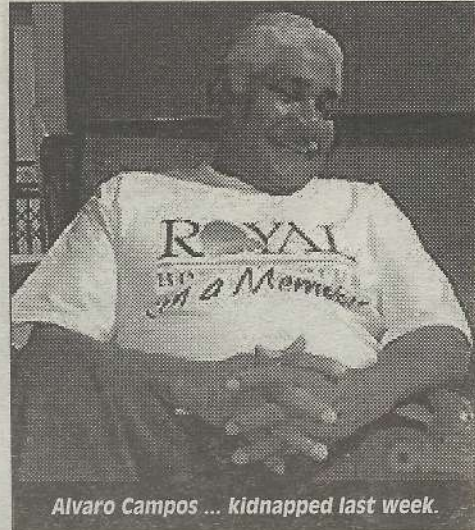
Acapulco, perhaps Mexico's most famed beach resort, is a part of Guerrero state, which has been plagued by abductions.

New York native Vincent Carroza, manager of

Acapulco's Princess Hotel, was held for eight days in December 1997. Businessman Melchor Perusquia was found murdered in March 1996 after his family had paid a ransom reported at about \$390,000.

A judge in neighboring Morelos state last year issued arrest warrants for a Guerrero state legislator and two mayors on suspicion of involvement in kidnappings. They insisted on their innocence and refused to surrender their official immunity as elected officials.

Morelos' own governor and top police officials were



Alvaro Campos ... kidnapped last week.

toppled last year after their police anti-kidnapping unit was implicated in kidnappings.

"They should have the death penalty here. There is too much impunity," said Ruth Felder, a 69-year old retired German woman who has lived in Mexico 37 years.

"It is terrible, and it's very bad for the national team. He is our star goalkeeper and who knows how the national team will do without Campos," said Raymundo Martinez, a 48-year old construction worker.

"It's just another kidnapping, but it happens to involve somebody famous," said businessman Hector Garcia, 40. "There are lots of kidnappings every day, but nobody seems to care anymore."

CHILEAN FAN'S DEATH SHOCKS A NATION

A 19-year-old fan of Colo Colo died early on Wednesday, nearly a week after being he was beaten by fans of rival club Universidad de Chile.

A Sotero del Rio Hospital release said Ricardo Pitron, who was declared brain dead shortly after the attack, died at 4:45 a.m. due to head injuries from the assault.

The killing was the second soccer-related death in just over two months in Chile. In December, 14-year-old Joel Llancaleo, also a fan of Colo Colo, was shot in the head during a confrontation between groups of fans of Colo Colo and Universidad.

Pitron was attacked with wooden bats and chains by a group of males wearing jerseys of

Universidad de Chile on Feb. 11 as he was walking on the street, according to a police report.

The beating came following a 2-2 draw between Colo Colo and Universidad, the two most popular clubs in Chile and which have wide followings including some of the most notorious "barras bravas" — or hooligan — groups.

Six men, including two minors, were arrested in connection with the beating.

Clashes between fans of Colo Colo and Universidad, the two most popular clubs in Chile, are common surrounding games, but until December had not resulted in any deaths since 1990.

Compiled by

GREECE

Soccer Weekly

A.D. Akrotas

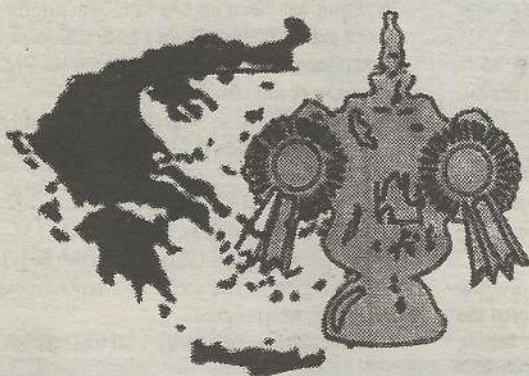
REDS ON COURSE FOR DOUBLE

GREEK CUP:

Kiparissis nets one, but Xanthi falls short

Thomas Kiparissis scored the only goal of the game to lead Xanthi to a 1-0 win over Olympiakos on Thursday at the Xanthi Stadium, but the defending league champions made it through to the Greek Cup semifinals despite the loss. Olympiakos won the 1st leg of this quarterfinal matchup last Thursday, 3-1.

Had Xanthi been able to net one more goal, they would have gone through on away goals.



Kiparissis tried to push his team through as he headed in a cross from Ali-Reza Mansourian in the 53rd minute. Mansourian took a free kick from well outside the area on the right side.

The ball came floating into the area and Kiparissis was able to outjump both Paraskevas Antzas and Grigoris Georgatos. Kiparissis' header then went flying into the left side of the net, easily beating Olympiakos goalkeeper Dimitris Eleftheropoulos.

Petros Tengelidis had the only good chance for a second goal when he was fed by Mansourian in the 74th minute. But the cross was a little off the mark and



Ceccoli opened his account at AEK.

Tengelidis did an excellent job to send a hard shot on net, despite having to jump and fall backwards just to get a touch on the ball.

The ball sailed just wide of the left post. Olympiakos had two good chances in the second half as substitute Luciano De Souza's first touch hit off the cross bar of Xanthi keeper Yuri Bucek's net.

Georgatos had the other chance, in the 89th minute, as Ilija Ivic made a tremendous run up the field and fed Georgatos running in on net. Bucek did well to come out and break up the play before Georgatos could work his magic. Xanthi tried one last-ditch effort in extra time as

even Bucek was up on a free kick from Mansourian. Eleftheropoulos, however, caught the ball and his touch, putting the ball back into play seconds later, was the last of the game.

The first half may have lasted 45 minutes, but it was only in the final seven minutes that anything exciting happened. The first great chance fell to Ba, in the 38th minute, who was running up field with Amanatidis on him and Eleftheropoulos charging off his line and out of his area. Ba was able to slide and tip the ball past both Olympiakos players and onto the foot of Kiparissis, who running down the middle of the field.

Kiparissis just got a touch on the ball as Antzas came in for the tackle. The ball popped up and barely went over the cross bar, landing in the netting above the goal.

Two minutes later, in the 40th minute, it was Olympiakos' turn to miss a golden opportunity. Papadimitriou had the ball in his own area when he was superbly dispossessed by Gogic.

Gogic smartly fed Alexandris, who was alone in the middle, standing right in front of the net. But the pass was a little too far ahead of Alexandris and his only touch wasn't true, allowing Bucek to knock it out of danger.

Xanthi managed two more good chances before the first half whistle blew as Ba sent in a cross from the right touchline in the 41st minute that found Patsatzoglou on the left side of the net. Patsatzoglou expertly sent a header on net, but the ball found the right post and bounced back into play.

Havos had the last chance to score in the half as he was fed by a Patsatzoglou header from midfield. Havos got in behind the defense of Antzas and Abonsai, but his loft went high over the net as Eleftheropoulos came out.

Olympiakos did have a couple of earlier chances, but nothing too dangerous. The best of the chances came in the 34th minute as Gogic fed Alexandris on the left side. Alexandris then sent a beautiful back-heel pass to Djordjevic, but his shot was neither hard nor difficult for Bucek to save. Olympiakos is the third team to reach the semifinals.

Iraklis made it through by beating Lykoi and Athinaikos surpassed Kalamata on away goals, both on Wednesday. The last game on the Greek Cup quarterfinals is Thursday evening as Panathinaikos hosts Panserraikos. Panathinaikos has a 3-0 advantage after the first leg, which was played in Serres.

XANTHI: Bucek (gk); Havos; Venetidis; Papadimitriou; Patsatzoglou; Sow (Tengelidis, 65); Ba; Mangan (Mansouria, 35); Kiparissis (c); Nikolaou; Geladaris.

OLYMPIAKOS: Eleftheropoulos (gk); Abonsai; Amanatidis; Antzas; Georgatos; Mavrogenidis; Poursanidis; Giannakopoulos (De Souza, 59) (Sfakianakis, 86); Djordjevic; Gogic; Alexandris (c) (Ivic, 74).

Iraklis loses at home, but reaches semi-finals anyway

Katkaridis scored a goal for Lykoi in the 90th minute to give his team a 2-1 victory over Iraklis on Wednesday in the 2nd leg of the Greek Cup quarterfinals, but it wasn't enough to stop Iraklis from earning a spot in the semi-finals.

Iraklis, a first division team, beat Lykoi, 3-1, in the first leg and therefore goes through on a 4-3 aggregate score. Lykoi is currently in 15th place in the second division, but played good enough to earn some confidence for the remainder of its season.

Lykoi even held a 1-0 lead at halftime as Klokidis fired and scored in the 27th minute.

It was the first chance for either team in the game and the first time Lykoi actually formed an attack. Giorgos Xenidis was able to equalize for the home team in the 49th minute as he finished off an easy shot and beat Lykoi goalkeeper Lekidis. Lekidis kept cool, however, and was able to stop Ebenjer Hagan on a one-on-one in the 58th minute.

In the 68th minute Iraklis blew another chance as Marios Christodoulou was standing across from Lekidis but failed to get a shot off in time. Pantelis tried to get a goal in the 70th minute, but his was well off the mark of Iraklis' goalkeeper, Christos Karkamanis. Katkaridis, however, was able to beat the Iraklis keeper in the 90th minute to earn the victory.

Iraklis will have to wait to see its opponent in the semifinal round. Olympiakos plays Xanthi and Panathinaikos plays Panserraikos on Thursday. Both Olympiakos and Panathinaikos look as if they will continue on the road for the Cup and Iraklis will likely draw one of the two. If not, Iraklis will draw second division team Athinaikos, who beat Kalamata yesterday with a 1-1 aggregate, winning on away goals.

IRAKLIS: Karkamanis (gk); Semos; Xenidis; Stoltidis; Javanovic (Velentzas, 70); Christodoulou; Tavaridis (Berneanou, 45); Dimitriadis (Sapanis, 80); Kofidis; Hagan; Anderson.

LYKOI: Lekidis (gk); Marinos; Stratilatis; Chrisostomidis; Kakoglou; Fidanis; Moschou (Baksevanos, 75); Haldogieridis; Zekeridis (Krounic, 66); Katkaridis; Klokidis (Pantelis, 66).

Haan doesn't have surprises in plan for PAOK

New PAOK coach Ari Haan says you'll see the best 11 players on the field for PAOK. He said he wasn't going to make any changes in the team he re-inherited this week.

Haan, a Dutchman, was hired early this week after former-coach Angelos Anastasiadis quit following a pair of bad results in three match days.

PAOK lost to Ethnikos Asteras, 1-0, three weeks ago and drew at home with Ionikos, 0-0, last week. The one bright spot was a 1-0 away win with Panionios.

The new coach reportedly watched Aris beat Proodeftiki on Wednesday and may already have a game plan for his team.

He may be thinking that his team can outlast their

rivals as Aris played great football in the first half-hour, at which time they scored the only goal of the game, but Haan may think his team can take control in the final 60 minutes.

ALSO: Newly signed Colombian Adolfo Valencia is hoping to take the field next week when PAOK hosts Kavala. If not then, then almost assuredly in two weeks time when PAOK travels to Athens to take on second-place Panathinaikos.

PANELIAKOS 1998-1999

GENERAL INFORMATION

Stadium: National Stadium of Pirgos **Seats:** 10,000
Phone: 0621.22.774

Team Colors: Red-White
President: Sakis Stavropoulos
Coach: Yiannis Kirastas
Assistant Coach: Vasilis Liris
Captains: Georgiou, Nousias, and Papandreou.
Office Address: Ahhileos 4 **Phone:** 0621.25.749
Worth: 120 Million Drachmas
Press: Kostas Papadopoulos
Trainer: Yiannis Banakas
Physical Therapists: A. Vgenopoulos



Yiannis Kirastas

STATISTICS

First Division: Paniliakos has 3 appearances in the A' Division, has played 102 games, has 45 losses, 25 ties, 32 wins, 154 goals against, and 126 goals for.

First Scorer: With 17 goals Barniac has left well behind him last year's first scorer Theodoros Arnilagos who has 11.

First in Appearances: Kostas Koloskopolis has 80 appearances with Paniliakos and he is first in appearances for the club. Second is Theodoros Arnilagos with 32.

Team Statistics: The player with the most seniority is Nikos Pappas who joined the club in 1996 from Kolindros.

Player Statistics: Giorgos Koltzos needs 11 more appearances to reach 100 while Tatsis needs 12.

TRADING

Came: Papandreou, Koltzos, Tasiopoulos, Tatsis, Ioannou, Ziakas, Papadopoulos, Giannakidis, Efthimiou, Sila, Ferekidis, and Giazinski.

Left: Kizeridis, Purkovic, Barniak, Samoladas, Kampas, Koloskopolis, Nasiakos, Trupkos, Lakis, Lignos, and Spirakos.

Renewed Contract:

Championships: 0
Doubles: 0

Cups: 0 (0 appearances as a finalist)

Yiannis Kirastas did a very good job last season as the coach for Paniliakos. This means that this year he'll be coaching the team trying to repeat last year's success.

This time around the team looks that it has a very good defensive line-up due to the acquisition of many good players from other clubs.

In only three short years the biggest names for Paniliakos have left the team.

After Giannakopoulos, and Gorgevic this year was Vasilis Lakis turn who went on to play for AEK.

President: Sakis Stavropoulos
Coach: Yiannis Kirastas

Compiled

Soccer

by

ASIA

Weekly

CARLSBERG CUP OVERSHADOWED BY TRAGEDY

Substitute Pavlo Cesar Chavez scored the crucial goal as Mexico beat the Hong Kong League XI 4-3 in a penalty shootout after battling to a scoreless draw at the end of regulation play in the Carlsberg Cup.

In the final Mexico met Egypt — the reigning African champion — who trounced Bulgaria 3-1. Hossam Hassan scored twice for the Egyptians in the first half. Full details next week.

The Mexicans, who fielded many players from the team that played in last year's World Cup in France,

were far superior but missed numerous scoring chances. The Hong Kong team was made of top players from the local soccer league.

Mexican Pavel Pardo's shot from a free-kick hit the crossbar in the dying minute of the match.

In the ensuing penalty shootout, Hong Kong's Gary McKeown and Wu Qunli missed their shots. Mexican Cuauhtemoc Blanco also missed, and when Chavez stepped up for the last kick, there was a hush among the 30,000 spectators at the Hong Kong soccer stadium.

Chavez, who substituted Francisco Palencia in the 57th minute, put the ball into the Hong Kong net with ease.

Mexico's coach Manuel Lapuente said he was using the Hong Kong tournament to prepare for June's Copa America tournament in Paraguay, where the Mexicans have been placed in the same group as Chile and Brazil.

It would also give Mexico a chance to play against Egypt ahead of July's Confederations' Cup, which Mexico will be hosting. In that tournament, Mexico is in

the same group as Saudi Arabia, Bolivia and Egypt.

In the Egypt-Bulgaria match, Hassan struck first in the 11th minute with a simple shot after the Bulgarian defenders were caught off guard.

Hassan headed in the second goal in the 31st minute after receiving a cross from Ahmed Hassan, who displayed brilliant footwork.

Bulgaria's top player, Hristo Stoichkov, who played for his country in last year's World Cup in France, failed to make any headway against the strong Egyptian defense. Egyptians made sure of victory when Hazem Imam scored in the 81st minute.

The dispirited Bulgarians got a consolation goal in the 88th minute when Hristo Iovov rounded an Egyptian player to tap in the ball into the net.

The two-day tournament is held annually to mark the Chinese New Year. Team lineups:

Mexico: Claudio Suarez, Salvador Cabrera, Miguel Zepeda, Cuauhtemoc Blanco, Oscar Perez, Pavel Pardo, Luis Hernandez, Francisco Palencia (Pavlo Cesar Chavez, 57th), Salvador Carmona, Rafael Marquez, Juan Manuel Abundis.

Hong Kong League XI: Victor Derbounov, Cristiano Cordeiro, Martin Kuhl, Gary Joseph McKeown, Tam Siu-wai, Michael Midwood, Cheng Siu-chung, Lee Kin-wo, Dimitre Kalkanov, Wu Qunli, Gerrard Guy Ambassa.

Egypt: Nader El Sayed, Ibrahim Hassan, Mohamed Youssef, Hossam Hassan, Abd El Sabry, Yasser Rayan, Hady Khashba, Hazem Imam, Ahmed Hassan, Ayman Abd El Aziz, Abd El Zaher Elsaka.

Bulgaria: Radostin Kishishev, Zlatomir Zagortchitch, Valentin Naidenov, Ilian Stoyanov, Ilian Grouev, Hristo Stoichkov, Hristo Iovov, Gueorgui Batchev, Petkov Gueorgui, Vladimir Yonkov.

The tournament was under a cloud after Mexican keeper Jorge Campos' father was kidnapped back in Mexico. The World Cup gloveman flew back to Acapulco immediately (see story on page 21).

KEEPER TO
ARSENAL
FOR TRIALS

ZULKARNAEN ZAINAL became the fifth Lion to go overseas for training-cum-trials when he left for Nitra FC in Slovakia.

The 25-year-old will be with the Slovakian First Division team for a two-week stint. He is expected to try for a contract but will return early next month if things do not work out.

The left-footed Geylang United midfielder's last-minute decision comes hot on the heels of the departure of two other national players.

Defenders R. Sasikumar and S. Subramani are presently training with Dutch club Zwolle

FC, having left Singapore last week.

Meanwhile, national goalkeeper Rezal Hassan for England on Saturday while another Lion, Rafi Ali, had spent a fortnight with Perth Glory two months ago.

Unlike the others, who had made their intentions clear some time ago, Zulkarnaen's departure caught many by surprise.

Club manager Adrian Quek said: "It was a last-minute thing. He only spoke to a couple of people before going. I believe he also handed his letter to coach Alan Vest only on the eve of his departure."

He added that Zulkarnaen had requested for the leave as he wanted some exposure to European soccer. The player, who will take care of his expenses, chose Nitra as it had some links with Singapore.

The former Czechoslovakian team had accommodated some of Singapore's promising players under the Goh Chok Tong/City Developments Talent Search Scheme in 1992.

It is understood that the Football Association of Singapore had also helped him to get in touch with the relevant authorities in Slovakia.

Eagles' coach Alan Vest (former Aussie-based coach) said that he was made aware of the player's plans only late last week.

Vest, who gave his blessings to the 25-year-old, voiced certain reservations.

Explained the Australian: "It is fantastic for anybody to get that kind of exposure but I just question the timing of the trip."

"It is winter and will be freezing out there. There's not a lot that a player can learn if he's not used to the conditions. It would have been better if it was during the European pre-season training in the summer."

"But it was the player's wish to go. I just hope that it is a mild winter this year."

Meanwhile, Rezal will leave for Arsenal where he will train under the Gunners' former No. 1 John Lukic for at least two weeks before going for trials with lower division teams.

Among the clubs that the Singapore Armed Forces FC custodian will be having stints are First Division teams Stoke City and Huddersfield FC.

While Zulkarnaen's trip is self-financed, Rezal will receive some assistance from the Warriors.

AFC CENTURY CLUB SPARKS
BACKLASH IN SINGAPORE

The recent announcing of a Century Club for Asian Football, a kind of Hall of Fame for players who have served the game well and have clocked up at least one hundred caps, has stirred up invidious feelings within Asia, according to local media reports in Singapore.

The Singapore based Straits Times has pointed out that if former Malaysian soccer captain Soh Chin Aun can chalk up 250 international caps, his then Singapore counterpart Samad Alapitchay would surely have at least two-fifths of that number in a 15-year international career.

That if ex-Malaysian striker-turned-sweeper Zainal Abidin Hassan can chalk up 170 caps, Singapore ace Fandi Ahmad could tote up a century as well.

That if second-echelon Malaysians Jamal Nasir (111) and Ahmad Yusof (103) can make the prestigious Asian Football Confederation's Century Club, surely Singapore's David Lee and Malek Awab can lay a stronger claim to joining the esteemed company.

Sadly, the Football Association of Singapore, the body that runs the universal game in the country, did not notice the inconsistency.

And what was the FAS's initial response to the Singaporeans missing out on the Hall-of-Fame-like award?

Its general secretary Tan Eng Yoon said: "I don't think anyone of our players has earned 100 international caps. I think former internationals Fandi Ahmad and David Lee would come closest to it."

On what basis was that statement made?

FAS president Ibrahim Othman said: "According to the records we have, we did not know that anyone had reached that figure. But if your calculations are right, we will definitely nominate them."

What a cop-out, roared the Times.

For as its writer explains, it just does not add up, for there is discrepancy even in those two statements.

And the question that needs to be answered is: Does the FAS have such records?

If not, appoint a statistician right now, and update your files.

For it is learnt that even a country like trouble-torn Albania can make available such records which are essential to the running of soccer.

It is well and good for Mr Ibrahim to mitigate thus: "This is a problem that started a long time before we joined the FAS. Records then were kept in a haphazard fashion. But we intend to correct that."

Does such a controversial event have to happen before the remedial process has to start for a council which has been together since April 1994?

And did the FAS recognise the seriousness of some decisions made at the recent AFC meeting in Kuala Lumpur?

When hearing that the Malaysians had nominated eight players on the list of 14 (the remaining six are from six different countries) for the Century Club, shouldn't the FAS have woken up to the reality?

Then there was the decision to make the South-east Asia Games in Brunei an Under-23 event.

It is detrimental to Singapore (which was caught unawares), but what was the Republic's voice doing at the meeting?

There seems to be a pleading of innocence from Mr Ibrahim's reactions to the two decisions.

But we cannot accept that.

For why should Fandi and company miss out on the award which surely has a bigger weightage in its inaugural year?

And why should Singapore (and certainly host Brunei) be blasted with the Under-23 ruling when the SEA Games is only five months away?

On the second incident, the FAS should seek a clarification soonest.

It is time the FAS, which only three months ago unravelled detailed plans to make it to the World Cup finals in 2010, start cleaning up its act, says the Straits Times.

And it has to begin with the quick implementation of the merger between the FAS and the S-League so that the route to professionalism is enhanced.

The merger decision was taken in early November last year — mind you it is estimated to bring about a saving of \$120,000 annually from salaries — and more than three months have passed but no further news has filtered out.

And there is no doubt that at times, the two bodies pull in different directions.

The joke about town has been that FAS stands for Forget After Service.

The recent Century Club incident gives credence to that regular refrain, especially when made by past national players.

Now that the damage is done and redress is limited, the FAS can soften the blow on Fandi, Samad, David and Malek by verifying Chin's records and conveying

apologies all round.

And not just gloss over the important issue and hope that it will be a distant memory.

GOMBAK UNITED striker Jorgen Nielsen has been given permanent residency in Singapore.

This means that the club has the option of registering the 29-year-old Dane as a local player.

The S-League club has two other foreign signings at the moment — Thai internationals Surachai Jirasirichote and Surachai Jatturapattarapong, both of whom were among the club's best players last season.

Each club is allowed to recruit a maximum of four foreigners.

Nielsen, who first arrived in 1995, worked for two years in a shipping firm and another year in an export company before coming under the S-League spotlight.

He was granted permanent residency last week.

The Gombak forward is now engaged to be married to Singaporean Pamela Pham.

It is a fortunate turn of events for the S-League newcomer.

The Bulls had refused to enter into the chase for national players because of its small budget. Consequently, it relies heavily on its imports.

At the moment, it has ex-internationals Stephen Ng in goal and Saswadimata Dasuki in midfield.

Even with the proven ability of Thai Jirasirichote in defence, the club will have to look for help in shoring up its backline — a glaring weakness of the club last season.

Gombak will meet Geylang United in the season-opener on March 31.



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Soccer Weekly

ITALY

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LAZIO DEFEAT INTER AND STAY ON TOP

Sergio Conceicao fired in a rebound in the first half Sunday to lead Lazio past UEFA Cup holder Inter Milan 1-0, bolstering the Roman club's bid for its first Serie A title in a quarter of a century.

The Portuguese midfielder ran on to slot home the ball after Gianluca Pagliuca, Italy's goalkeeper at the last two World Cups, blocked a dangerous header by Christian Vieri in the 38th minute before a crowd of 65,000 at Olympic Stadium.

Luca Marchegiani made a late, acrobatic save on veteran striker Roberto Baggio's shot in the dying seconds to preserve the victory for Lazio, which took home its lone league championship in 1974.

Lazio, which lost to Inter in last season's UEFA Cup final and again in this year's Italian Cup competition, has won 10 of its last 11 league games to move atop the table with 45 points.

Playing yet again without injured star striker Ronaldo, Inter fell to sixth place with 34 points. The team has lost four of its past five road games.

AC Milan pulled into second place, two points behind Lazio, by beating Cagliari 1-0 thanks to an own-goal by veteran defender Matteo Villa, who accidentally deflected in a header by Milan's German striker Oliver Bierhoff.

AC Parma also kept pace, improving to 41 points with a 2-1 victory at Salernitana. Defender Fabio Cannavaro scored for the first time in three years and Croatia's Mario Stanic added Parma's other goal, making up for Argentine striker Hernan Crespo's missed penalty kick in the first half — one of three shots from the spot that were wasted Sunday.

Elsewhere, Juventus won its second straight under new coach Carlo Ancelotti, downing Vicenza 2-0 as striker Nicola Amoruso and midfielder Antonio Conte each scored his first goal of the season. Despite its mini-revival, the two-time defending champion is 12 points out of first place.

In other games, Argentine striker Roberto Carlos Sosa tallied twice in fifth-place Udinese's 4-0 rout of Bari; Giuseppe Signori missed a penalty but redeemed himself with a late, insurance goal as Bologna beat last-place Empoli 2-0; Sampdoria of Genoa snapped a 13-game winless skid by holding off Piacenza 3-2, and Venezia edged Perugia 2-1.

WEEKEND HIGHLIGHTS

Lazio 1 Inter 0

In Rome, Conceicao's third goal of the season was enough for Lazio, which never fully had its league-best attack (44 goals) in sync, to stay unbeaten at home.

While Lazio looks more and more like the title favorite with 12 games to go, Inter likely lost its last chance to climb back into the race.

Milan 1 Cagliari 0

At Milan, the hosts needed some help to stretch their unbeaten streak to 11 games. Villa, who started his career with Milan, put Bierhoff's shot past his own goalkeeper in the 50th minute.

Cagliari, which ended Lazio's nine-game winning streak a week ago by holding the leaders to a 0-0 draw.

Parma 2 Salernitana 1

In Salerno, Cannavaro knocked in the opening goal off a Diego Fuser corner kick in the 42nd, two minutes after Crespo's penalty kick was blocked by Salernitana goalkeeper Andrea Ivan, a 26-year-old making his Serie A debut.

Stanic made it 2-0 in the 54th, before Marco Di Vaio threw a scare into Parma with his fourth goal in two games for Salernitana, which is 17th of 18 teams.

Juventus 2 Vicenza 0

In Turin, where Vicenza last won in 1979, Amoruso scored in the 10th minute and Conte 12 minutes later — both off assists from French World Cup hero Zinedine Zidane. Juventus striker Filippo Inzaghi returned from a month hiatus for a leg injury, playing the final 25 minutes.

Udinese 4 Bari 0

At Udine, Sosa scored in the 38th minute off a Brazilian striker Marcio Amoruso's assist and in the 48th off a pass from Belgian defender Regis Genaux, raising his total to nine goals for Udinese.

Bari had defender Gaetano De Rosa sent off in the 57th, and the hosts capitalized, upping their margin with goals by Amoruso, in the 64th and defender Valerio Bertotto in the 78th.

Sampdoria 3 Piacenza 2

In Genoa, where Piacenza had lost all five outings, Sampdoria built a 3-0 lead and withstood a late rally. Vincenzo Montella hit a penalty kick in the 23rd minute for his first goal since Week 1.

France's Pierre Laigle headed in Argentine playmaker Ariel Ortega's free kick 10 minutes later, and Ortega scored off a Montella pass in the 57th for Samp. Gianpietro Piovani scored for Piacenza in the 67th and 80th.

Bologna 2 Empoli 0

At Bologna, midfielder Jonathan Binotto slotted in an angled shot in the 15th minute and Signori — whose penalty in the 49th was saved — doubled the advantage with nine minutes left by tapping Russian striker Igor Kolyvanov's pass into an empty net.

Venezia 2 Perugia 1

At Venice, where Perugia has won only once, in 1933, Uruguayan striker Alvaro Recoba

SERIE A STANDINGS

TOP SEVEN

	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Lazio	22	13	6	3	44	21	45
Milan	22	12	7	3	34	24	43
Fiorentina	22	13	4	5	37	19	43
Parma	22	11	8	3	40	21	41
Udinese	22	10	6	6	31	28	36
Inter	22	10	4	8	43	30	34
Juventus	22	9	6	7	26	23	33

BOTTOM FOUR

Sampdoria	22	4	8	10	21	40	20
Piacenza	22	4	7	11	27	37	19
Salernitana	22	5	4	13	22	38	19
Empoli	22	3	8	11	19	38	15

scored in the 12th minute and set up Filippo Maniero's goal in the 47th for Venezia, which overcame captain Gianluca Luppi's penalty miss. Christian Bucchi scored for Perugia in injury time.

Fiorentina 0 Roma 0

In the evening game, no goals were scored, a result which does not help both sides especially Fiorentina who relinquish the lead at the top that they have held for most of the season.

Fiorentina clearly missed their star striker upfront, Gabriel Batistuta who is expected to be out for most of Fiorentina's remaining games.

NEXT ROUND IN
SERIE A

BARI V CAGLIARI
 EMPOLI V SAMPDORIA
 INTER V JUVENTUS
 PARMA V PERUGIA
 PIACENZA V BOLOGNA
 ROMA V MILAN
 SALERNITANA V FIORENTINA
 VENEZIA V UDINESE
 VICENZA V LAZIO



Brazilian star Edmundo is tackled by Roma's Aldair in Sunday's evening clash. The game ended 0-0



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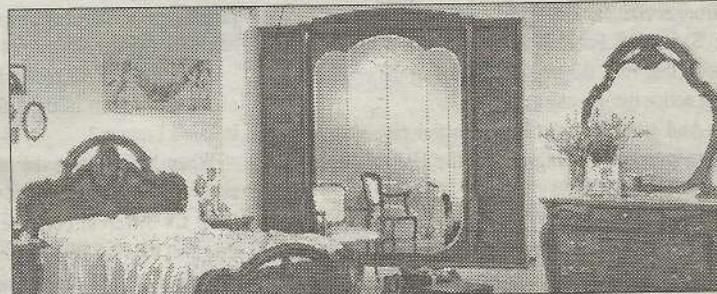


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EFFENBERG SAYS FANS WANT BIENNIAL

Former German international Stefan Effenberg said the European Championship could be abolished in favor of staging the World Cup every two years.

"In practice that would mean a break for one year, then the World Cup the next year," the 30-year-old Bayern Munich midfielder told the SID agency.

Effenberg said that introducing a World Cup every two years would be great for spectators.

"If you have to choose between the European Championship and the World Cup — ask the fans. They prefer the World Cup. It's also more attractive for players," he said.

The chairman of reigning league champion and Portuguese Cup holder FC Porto has promised changes after an embarrassing home defeat in the fifth round against a minor team.

Torreense, a club from the Second Division B which has a part-time coach, beat FC Porto 1-0 on a late goal in Tuesday's fifth-round, knocking the First Division leader out of the competition.

FC Porto coach Fernando Santos was jeered by fans at the Antas stadium.

"A lot will have to change, especially attitude," club chairman Jose Pinto da Costa said, though he said Santos would not be fired.

"We didn't expect this disaster. There's no acceptable justification for it," Pinto da Costa told reporters. He said the players, who were criticized for being overconfident and sluggish, would have to change their attitude.

FC Porto has won the league title for the past four years.

The humbling result was mitigated by the 2-0 defeat of Benfica, FC Porto's main rival, at Setubal.

Sporting Lisbon, the country's third most powerful club, was knocked out in the previous round, leaving northern club Boavista primed to take the title in June.

French soccer officials expressed concern on Monday over the violence that flared at the end of Olympique Marseille's 1-0 defeat at Toulouse.

"We are waiting for a report from the referee in a day or two and there will be a disciplinary committee meeting to deal with the matter," a league spokesman said.

"But we must admit that we are concerned."

WORLD CUP

This is not the first time Marseille's supporters have been mixed up in outbreaks of violence," he said.

Twelve days ago, three stewards were injured in clashes with Marseille fans unhappy with the defeat after a late penalty.



In December Marseille was banned from using its stadium for one match after the club's fans invaded the pitch before a 3-0 victory over Metz.

Marseille had to play its League Cup first-round match against French champion RC Lens in Caen, losing on penalties.

"It's too early to say if another suspension will hit the Stade Velodrome but clubs must be aware they are responsible for their supporters even when they play away," the spokesman said.

Violence involving fans also stopped a second-division match between Cannes and Nice two weeks ago and put Cannes goalkeeper Sebastien Chabbert in the hospital.

The French football league banned Nice from using their stadium for one match and ordered a replay of the game. But Nice lodged an appeal and a final decision is pending.

Still in France and Olympique Marseille received a timely morale boost from coach Roland Courbis on Wednesday when he pledged his future to the club.

Despite having said in 1997 he wanted to stay at Marseille for only a year, Courbis said: "It's my second season here and I'm pretty sure I'll be here for a while ... at least five years. I changed my mind."

"I have to live up to my reputation — if Courbis doesn't change his mind he would not be Courbis anymore."

A run of poor results since the French winter break — including a shock 1-0 defeat at Toulouse — has dented Marseille's once-supreme confidence and placed a question mark over their ability to win the race for the French title.

They have now lost two of their last three league matches including a 4-1 thumping at archrivals Girondins Bordeaux two weeks ago.

Courbis agreed the second-place club is facing a mini crisis but said he is still convinced Marseille can clinch the league title this year.

"It's obvious that we aren't getting along very well together at the moment. But the harder it is the more I want to stay," Courbis said in the French daily L'Equipe.

"We are going to be champions whatever the problems are," he said, "I'm sure of that."

We will see.

FRENCH STAR GIVES GUNNERS A BUM RAP

Nicolas Anelka has once again strained relationships with just about everyone in his team and England after his comments to a magazine were picked up.

Anelka made his remarks in the February issue of RER magazine, which were selectively reported in France's daily sports newspaper L'Equipe.

The Arsenal striker said: "The English, they don't count on you. When you are a nobody, you are a little (expletive). You must play, prove to the older players that you are good. When you are the best, then they accept you."

Anelka also claimed the Premier League champions had different factions, saying:

"There are clans at Arsenal. I speak a bit of English now but we never speak much

with the English.

"We have nothing to do with each other. We play together, but afterwards we go our own way. There are 33-year-old, 37-year-old guys here and we have nothing to say to each other."

The former Paris St Germain striker, who scored both goals in France's 2-0 win over England at Wembley last week, added: "Furthermore they don't like the French here."

Especially the press. They slate the French."

Anelka conceded that players like Eric Cantona and David Ginola had adapted well in England, but added: "I look at Patrick Vieira. He gets red cards when he has done nothing. When an Englishman

does something the referee doesn't even whistle. They are tougher on the French in general."

In previous interviews Anelka has made it clear he has found it hard to settle and has also criticised Dutch teammates Dennis Bergkamp and Marc Overmars for not passing to him. He was fined by Arsenal boss Arsene Wenger for that outburst.

He has in the past been linked with Barcelona and a return to his former club PSG, but last week denied he wanted to leave the London side.

Nigerian international Finidi George has extended his contract with Spain's Real Betis for another three years, and will stay in Seville until 2004, the club announced.

No financial details were

released of the deal that will keep the player at the club until he is 33-years-old.

The striker has become one of the most popular players at the club since his arrival in 1996 from Ajax Amsterdam. Still in Spain and Spanish international striker Alfonso Perez is facing his second long injury layoff of the season after aggravating a knee problem.

The Real Betis player, who was out of action for more than three months after limping out of the European championship qualifier against Cyprus in September, suffered further ligament damage in the league game against Racing Santander and will be out for another six to eight weeks.

He will now almost certainly miss the European qualifiers against Austria and San Marino at the end of March.

And Brazilian midfielder Denilson spoke on Wednesday of his relief after breaking his barren streak at Real Betis.

The world's most expensive footballer, who cost Real Betis \$35 million last summer, got his first goal in the Spanish first division in his club's 1-1 draw with Racing Santander.

"Scoring that goal was very important, things have now become very different," Denilson said, breaking a three-day silence.

He added: "Thanks to God for that moment because I've been through some tough times. Now I am more relaxed."

In recent games Denilson has started to show more of the ability that prompted Real Betis to part with so much money.

His scintillating form at Sao Paulo in his native Brazil deserted him during much of the first four months of the Spanish sea-

son, to the extent that he was even briefly dropped.

He also cut a miserable figure as he returned to Brazil for his Christmas holiday although he appeared to come back to Spain in a better frame of mind.

"It has taken me some time but now I feel I am adapting to Spanish football," he said.



Nicolas Anelka playing against Man United midweek. His list of grievances include his teammates, the press and referees. What next, the weather?

In TV news, Spain is working towards a change in the law over TV pay-per-view soccer matches, secretary of state for sports Francisco Villar said.

"Games of national interest should be open," Villar said. "We are working towards this and think this should be the case."

His words come in the wake of the big

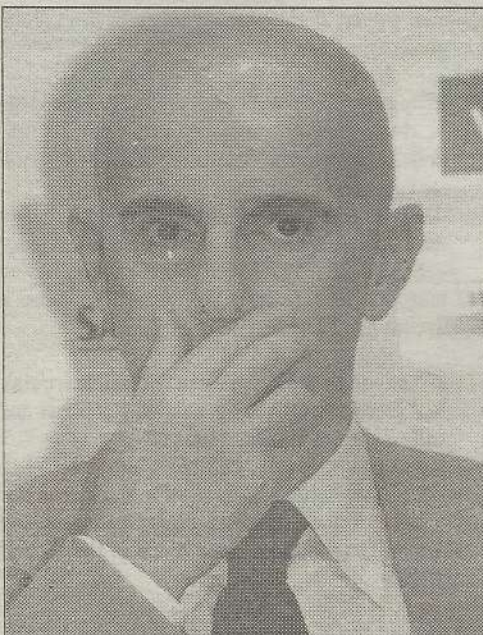
match between Barcelona and Real Madrid which was shown on pay-per-view for the first time by a satellite broadcaster.

The switch caused an outcry from the general public and politicians of all persuasions. Barcelona coach Louis van Gaal was even moved to declare: "Soccer belongs to the people not big business."

An estimated 250,000 paid to see the

match although more than double that number are believed to have watched it in bars showing the game. Normal viewing figures are between eight and 10 million.

Other matches deemed of "national interest" are likely to include Real Madrid v Atletico Madrid and Athletic Bilbao v Real Sociedad.



El Disaster Arrigo Sacchi... he has said the words many have wished to hear: "I am not coming back to Soccer ... ever".

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EUROPE

Soccer Weekly

BAYERN EASY WINNERS
OVER MSV IN BUNDESLIGA

Bayern Munich, almost everybody's favorite to claim the Bundesliga title, needed just one match to deal the hopes of any challengers another blow.

Munich rolled past MSV Duisburg 3-0 Saturday, handing the Zebras their first home loss of the season, as the Bundesliga returned to action after the two-month winter break.

The Bavarians moved 10 points clear of second-place Bayer Leverkusen, which needed an 84th minute goal from Brazil's Paulo Rink to salvage a 1-1 draw with SC Freiburg.

"The concentration, our effort and the way we fought weren't good enough for the top of the Bundesliga," said Leverkusen coach Christoph Daum.

Another challenger, Borussia Dortmund, didn't fare as well, falling 3-0 to up-and-coming Hertha Berlin behind two goals by newcomer Ilija Aracic.

Third-place 1860 Munich featuring Aussie Ned Zelic, turned in a cracker, spoiling the debut of Reinhold Fanz as Eintracht Frankfurt coach with a 4-1 victory.

In other matches, Ranier Adrien won in his first outing as the new VfB Stuttgart coach, as his team won 2-1 against Schalke. FC Nuremberg also drew 1-1 with Bremen.

On Friday, Wolfsburg and Rostock fought to a 1-1 draw.

Munich, picked by more than 90 percent of the Bundesliga players to claim the title for a record 15th time, coasted against Duisburg after Carsten Jancker 26th minute go-ahead goal.

Stefan Effenberg set up the goal, then connected himself in the 41st with an accurate shot from 12 yards. Thomas Helmer came off the bench and headed in the third score in the 71st.

"We attacked our opponents early and scored two wonderfully-played out goals," said Munich coach Ottmar Hitzfeld.

Berlin slipped past Dortmund into fifth place, playing at home in front of 68,000 spectators. But the team also had a costly injury when Norwegian libero Kjetil Rekdal suffered a hairline fracture.

1860 Munich, the surprise team this season, closed to



Duisburg's Brugera with Bayern's Babel (left).

within two points of Leverkusen from goals by Bulgaria's Daniel Borimirov, Horst Heldt, Marco Kurz and Bernd Hobsch.

A late goal by Polish midfielder Krzysztof Nowak enabled VfL Wolfsburg to snatch a 1-1 draw at home to Hansa Rostock in a German first division match on Friday.

Nowak struck from close range with nine minutes remaining but a draw against lowly Rostock has hurt seventh-placed Wolfsburg's hopes of European competition next season.

Rostock, struggling to avoid relegation, climbed one place to 15th in the 18-strong league.

Germany defender Marko Rehmer had put the visitors ahead with a header in the 36th minute.

VfL Bochum was due to entertain Hamburg SV in the other match scheduled for Friday as the Bundesliga resumed after a 60-day winter break but the game was postponed because of snow.

No new date has been set yet.

INGLEMUNSTER ALMOST PULL
OFF SHOCK IN BELGIUM

Standard Liege struck twice in the closing minutes to end any Belgium Cup dreams of third-division Inglemunster with a 2-1 win on Saturday.

Although it was a goal down and reduced to 10 men after Josko Bilic was sent off in the 31st minute, Standard fought back to win the quarter-final tie.



Inglemunster took the lead when former Ghent player Nico Vanderdonck slotted home a penalty after Standard's Josko Bilic was sent off for bringing down an opponent.

The five-times cup winners picked themselves up with an equalizer on the stroke of half time from Antonio Dos Santos Folha.

Cruz put them ahead in the 80th minute and one minute from the end Dmitri de Conde made victory certain.

In the other quarterfinal played in Saturday, Lokeren easily dismissed mid-table first-division rivals Westerlo 3-0.

Lokeren's task was made easier when Westerlo striker Toni Brogno, reported to be looking to leave the club, was shown the red card in the 44th minute for spitting at an opponent.

Sint-Truiden faces Genk today (Tues) in the

Bez, who led the club for 12 years, should have been the leading figure in the trial but he died last month from heart failure at the age of 58.

Former Bordeaux general manager Didier Couecou, former general secretary Herve Bizot and two agents, Croat Ljubomir Barin and Portuguese Licio D'Onofrio, are the four defendants.

Charges in the trial range from bribery to fraud and embezzlement, allegedly in the negotiation of players' transfers.

According to police, 33 million francs (\$7 million) were used illegally in the transfers to Bordeaux of players such as Germany's Uwe Reinders, Denmark's Jesper Olsen and Croats Zlatko and Zoran Vujovic. Four million francs are also alleged to have been used to bribe referees before European cup games.

AC Milan have approached French champions ARC Lens for playmaker Stephane Dalmat, sports daily L'Equipe said.

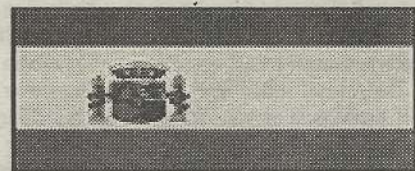
"Stephane Dalmat is one of our targets. We are discussing with Lens and we will meet (Lens president) Gervais Martel in Paris soon," said Adriano Galliani, Milan's vice-president.

The 20-year-old Dalmat is one of the most gifted players to emerge in the French first division in recent seasons.

Barcelona had their lead at the top of the Spanish first division cut to three points after being held to a 0-0 draw at third-placed Celta Vigo.

Mallorca closed the gap behind Barcelona after winning 3-1 at Oviedo, helped by a goal in each half from Dani Garcia.

Barcelona endured the last 19 minutes against Celta with only 10 men after their captain Luis Figo received his second yellow card for a hand-



ball.

Celta had the best chances in a thrilling match with Haim Revivo and Lubo Penev both going close on several occasions. Valery Karpin had a shot tipped against the crossbar by Barcelona goalkeeper Ruud Hesp.

Carolina Domenech last weekend became the first woman to officiate at a Spanish first division match, the Spanish football federation said.

Domenech was the fourth official at Sunday's match between Espanyol and Deportivo Coruna.

She has already refereed Spanish third division matches this season, and has also been a lineswoman at second division games.

Osasuna's Polish international Miroslav Trzeciak, 30, has signed a new contract and will stay in Spain until at least 2002.

Trzeciak, the 1998 Polish Player of the Year, joined the Pamplona club in the middle of last season. He has scored six goals this season and helped Osasuna to second place in the second division.

HIDDINK ON BRINK AS
REAL LOSE AGAIN

By the time you read this Real coach Gus Hiddink will probably be out of a job. If not, then it won't be too far coming if the results continue to unimpress the Club's fans and board.

The loss at home was Madrid's second-straight and third in its last five league matches, dropping it to 11-4-8 and 37 points, in fifth place in the Spanish league but in danger of slipping a spot when Deportivo La Coruna plays its 23rd round match Sunday.

The victory improved Bilbao to seventh place with a 10-7-5 record and 37 points, six behind Primera Division leader Barcelona.

In two other games on Saturday, Extremadura beat Betis 2-1 and Zaragoza won 4-2 over Racing in Santander.

But in Madrid, Real pushed forward constantly but lacked coordination and its attacks dissipated.

Bilbao nearly went ahead in the 55th minute when Ismael Urzaiz's header was spectacularly saved by Real's German keeper Bodo Illgner. But Illgner couldn't stop Ezquerro's right-footed smash 18 minutes later.

By the final whistle, the white-handkerchief waving crowd at Santiago Bernabeu Stadium was on its feet "Fuera, Fuera" (Out, Out) at the club manager Lorenzo Sanz as well as Hiddink.

Hiddink's job has looked increasing uncertain in recent weeks, especially on a 3-0 drubbing by arch-rival Barcelona on Feb. 14. Wednesday's 6-2 victory over Racing in the Copa del Rey afforded him a momentary reprieve, but Saturday's loss only fueled his problems.

"We played well in the first half. We had bad luck," Hiddink said. "I am not a frightened man."

Elsewhere, at Almendralejo, Argentine striker Carlos Dure score with two minutes remaining, capping a flurry which saw all three goals in the final 12 minutes and giving Extremadura the victory.

Extremadura took the lead in the 78th minute on a penalty converted by Jose Toril, but Jose Galvez equalized for Betis within five minutes.

At Santander, four different players scored for Zaragoza and it cruised to its victory over Racing.

Roberto Acuna of Paraguay put Zaragoza ahead in the 20th minutes and Pablo Jose Diaz scored the eventual game winner nine minutes later to put his side ahead 2-1.

Bosnian Sabo Milosovic made in 3-1 in the 69th and Marcos Vales added the finale just before the final whistle.

Results of French Cup
second-round matches on Saturday
(II denotes second division, III third, etc.)

La Montagnarde (V)	4	Paris FC (III)	0
RC Lens	3	Olympique Marseille	1
Dijon (IV)	0	Sedan (II)	4
Amiens (II)	1	Le Havre	0
Guingamp (II)	2	Strasbourg	1
Chateauroux (II)	2	Laval (II) 1 (after extra time)	
Angouleme (III)	1	Chateauroux (IV)	0
Rouen (IV)	2	St Denis-St Leu (IV)	0
Clermont (IV)	4	Jura-Sud Foot (V)	1
Paris St Germain	1	Nantes	1

(Nantes qualified after penalty shoot-out)

Played on Friday:

Wasquehal (II)	0	Metz	2
Ajaccio (III)	1	Troyes (II)	1
(after extra time. Troyes won 3-1 on penalties)			
St Georges-les-Ancizes (V)	1	Sochaux	0

other quarterfinal matches.

In the only league match played on Saturday, Anderlecht cruised to a 2-0 win over Germinal Ekeren with goals from Greek striker Ioannis Anastasiou and Patrick van Diemen.

Four former leading officials of Girondins Bordeaux will appear in court for a trial that could shed new light on allegations of fraudulent practice and bribery in French soccer in the 1980s.



Nine years after the start of an investigation into the financial disaster which rocked the most successful French team of the early 1980s, the court will consider how its debts had reached more than 300 million francs (\$60 million) when then-president Claude Bez resigned in 1990.

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UK

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HEARTS IN COURT OVER FINANCIAL TROUBLES

Hearts are going to court to prove that they're solvent. The cash-strapped Jambos are being put under pressure to deliver a dividend by shareholders who have lost money by investing in the club, reports the Daily Record.

Accumulated losses over recent years mean Hearts are extremely unlikely to be in a position to do so this year.

So the Board have applied to the Court of Session to let them restructure their share accounts. Effectively, this would mean those losses being written off.

The hope is they can then give institutional investors — the ones piling on the pressure — some money by way of a dividend to make up for the cash they have lost.

Institutions such as the Royal Bank of Scotland own around a quarter of the club and have seen the share price plummet. At the time of Hearts' stockmarket flotation, shares were bought at £1.40. Now they sit around the 80p mark.

To be successful in court, Hearts are likely to have to prove they are profitable and will continue to be so in the next few years. With the wage bill spiralling and gates falling, that will be difficult.

Even last year when Hearts won the Scottish Cup, they made a loss of £1.9million.

Hearts directors confirmed they have started their legal moves, but would not explain why.

But if they do pay out a dividend, not just the bankers will benefit. Hearts' chief executive Chris Robinson and chairman Leslie Deans own around 44 per cent of the Tynecastle shares between them and would stand to make substantial cash.

Meanwhile, the Scottish Premier League is

set to introduce "virtual reality advertising" on trackside hoardings during live televised matches by the end of the season in a move designed to generate hundreds of thousands of pounds of new income into the Scottish game.

Using ground-breaking technology perfected by Israeli scientists for their guided-missile systems(!) television companies in different countries will be able to advertise different products by superimposing images onto advertising boards at the side of the pitch at Scottish games.

For instance, spectators at a live televised game, say between the Old Firm, would notice that some advertising hoardings at the side of the pitch were blank.

However, those watching on television at home would see advertising for products superimposed on the boards that was applica-

ble to each individual country.

For example, different beers can be advertised on the same trackside hoarding in different countries.

In Germany, the name of Becks beer, would be superimposed on the advertising hoarding, while in Australia, the name of Castlemaine XXXX, would be beamed onto the same hoarding while Italian broadcasters would use advertising for Peroni and in America Budweiser beer could be advertised, all on the same hoarding at the side of the pitch.

Multi-national car companies, soft-drink manufacturers, and confectionery firms have also shown interest as Ford and Mars can localise advertising in different countries, promoting products the sales of which they want to increase in certain countries.

Such is the growing interest in Scottish football worldwide, particularly games involving the Old Firm, that the virtual reality advertising would be a major money-spinner for the game north of the Border.

The SPL have this week agreed a deal to supply coverage of games to around 100 countries throughout the world, which will take action from Premier League games into countries in North America, Asia, the Middle East, and the majority of European countries.

Their strategy was to offer the rights to show the games at a relatively low price, realising that the real money to be generated was through virtual-reality advertising.

The English Premiership has already tested the idea, with encouraging results, with several multi-national companies coming on board to advertise their products.

The SPL strategy has been to gauge the results of the English tests and they have been so encouraging that they are now in a position to use the technology to introduce virtual reality advertising at a live Scottish game before the end of the season.

The two men who have been spearheading the move have been SPL chief executive Roger Mitchell and the organisation's marketing director, Paul Blanchard.

Blanchard said that the virtual-reality advertising was so sophisticated that broadcasters could beam any image they want on any part of the ground.

"We don't want to rush things for BSKYB, but we hope to be in a position to try virtual reality advertising by the end of the season," he said.

"The feedback from the tests they had in England were very encouraging and we feel it will appeal to major television companies in attracting advertising and we feel it will be a big success for Scottish football."

Mitchell said that he felt there would be a big take-up of virtual advertising as the pull of the Scottish game worldwide was growing year by year.

The issue of advertising at sporting events has been at the centre of major debate, with companies trying to work out different ways to promote their products.

International rugby was at the centre of controversy two weeks ago when the Five Nations' sponsors, Lloyds-TSB, decided to put their slogan on the grass at Lansdowne Road.

Unfortunately for them, the dye came off and covered the players strips, leading for calls for the exercise never to be repeated.

CROOKSTOWN UTD!

Cookstown United could do with a decent break as they struggle at the foot of the 'B' Division Section I in Ireland.

One win in 19 matches tells its own story for manager Colin Farrell who is working tirelessly to try and turn things around.

A break is certainly what United got in the last couple of weeks double whammy style of the worst kind.

Prior to the recent 2-1 defeat at Loughgall, Cookstown suffered a double blow at Brantwood when central defender Stephen Hunter broke his leg.

And if that wasn't bad enough, he joins goalkeeping brother Niall who suffered a similar injury two months ago. Both are out for the rest of the season.

Niall received a very bad break on December 19, leaving him sidelined for at least a year. He was a spectator at the Brantwood game when Stephen got his setback which will keep him out of football for six months.

"I guess the pair of us will be sitting around the house now for a while," said Niall.

"I couldn't believe it when it happened to Stephen but it's just one of those things." "I have a frame around my leg with pins going into the bone. It looks very uncomfortable and sore, but it's not just as bad now and sleeping is no longer a nightmare.

"There did not seem many problems when Stephen challenged for the ball there was no bad tackle or anything and I didn't hear a crack.

"At first I just thought it was bad bruising but Stephen knew differently and when he got to hospital, it was confirmed just below the knee. He was even treated by the same nurse.

"Now we are both hobbling around the house and relying on other people to help get us about but we will not be put off attending the Cookstown games," added Niall.

February 18, 1998, is a date no-one at Llanelli Football Club will forget. That night, at Llanelli's Stebonheath Park, player-manager Robbie James collapsed half-an-hour into a Welsh League game against Porthcawl.

The former Wales international midfielder, only 40, was taken to hospital but was pronounced dead on arrival.

A year on and the signs are Llanelli, now in the hands of Leighton James, another ex-international and who was a close friend of Robbie James, have recovered from the tragedy.

They are currently second in the CC Sports Welsh League Division One, eight points behind Ton Pentre.

A place in the League of Wales beckons, especially since Ton Pentre have not applied for League of Wales status. Despite avoiding relegation, Ton Pentre resigned from this league in 1997 citing financial reasons and appear reluctant to return so soon.

"I didn't try to change things. There was a danger of trying to do things Robbie's way," says James, who celebrated his 46th birthday earlier this week.

"The best way forward, I felt, was to do things my way and not to try to copy him, or emulate him in any way. We were different characters, different personalities, although we had similar beliefs on how the game should be played."

James, a dashing winger with Burnley, Derby County, QPR, Swansea City and Sunderland, joined Llanelli as manager last June.

"Because I took over in the summer there had been, how can I put it, a period of calm after Robbie's death," he says.

"But for those who were at the game the night Robbie died, the trauma cut deeper than they were prepared to admit.

"There were a lot of haunted faces and some of the players were a bit unsure of what was going to happen. It was a strange atmosphere. The players who weren't at the club when Robbie died were OK, the others were not so OK.

"The testimonial game against Stoke purged a lot of souls. After that it felt as if Robbie, even though he is still remembered, had been laid to rest."

James admits having second thoughts about filling his friend's shoes at Stebonheath Park. "I sat down and thought, 'Is it right?' and 'Don't they need a complete change, not one of his mates?' but the club wanted someone who shared Robbie's beliefs on the game.

"I wondered whether I should come back to Wales, but after speaking to the people at Llanelli I felt there was enough desire and ambition here. It's also a fantastic set-up. In the Welsh non-league, you'd be hard pushed to find a better ground.

"Of course, I miss Robbie too. He made an impression on everyone he met.

He was the sort of guy who would give you his last Rolo. If you broke down and it was the middle of the night, he would come and fetch you."

He believes Robbie's tragic death cost the club promotion last season. "Llanelli won the next seven games after Robbie died, but then they fell away. I believe the club suffered an after-shock."

As for James, his first days at Llanelli were mixed. "You can't expect things to change overnight. In the first two months I was pottering around with the team. We won a few but we lost a few as well."

The turning point for James's Llanelli came after a 5-0 drubbing at Ton Pentre. "In the last 15 minutes I tried a new striking partnership and put Mark Dickinson up with Martyn James. We improved straight away and in 15 starts together they have scored 29 goals. That was the catalyst which set us on our way."

Under the former Burnley star, Llanelli notched up 13 consecutive wins, a club record. "We went from bottom half of the table to the top. The previous record was 12. We won 13 but then we went and lost the 14th," he laughs.

James, who works for the Panda Cars dealership in Swansea, run by Llanelli chairman Bobby Jones, is "quietly confident" his team will be

sion is nine-tenths. In football, it's ten-tenths."

That sign is one of three James has hung up. The other two are, 'If you fail to prepare, be prepared to fail', and, 'Good players do the right thing in the right area at the right time'.

"I told the chairman at the start that we are going to play only one way and he feels the same way as I do."

The ex-international has moved from his home in Morecambe, Lancashire.

He is currently renting in Gorseinon, just outside Swansea, but is waiting to see what happens before settling permanently in Wales.

"I've been impressed with the standard of this division. We have players who could easily hold their own in the League of Wales, if not the lower divisions of the Football League."

Last weekend Llanelli had a chance to avenge that 5-0 defeat by Ton Pentre. The fact it was also the first anniversary of the death made the crucial game even more important for Llanelli.

Speaking before the game James said: "I don't know if I'll mention Robbie before the game, I don't think I'll have to because the players who were at the club the night he died know what date it is.

"There will be an emotional kick-back. They will stop, sit and remember and I don't want to interfere with their private thoughts.

"I think Robbie would have been pleased to see me take over from him. We were great friends and we shared the same football philosophy.

"If we achieve our goal this season, there would be no-one prouder than Robbie — and I'm sure he's up there watching us."

LEIGHTON James joined Burnley in 1968 and turned professional in 1970. He made his debut against Nottingham Forest. Eleven months later he made his Welsh debut against Czechoslovakia in Prague. It was the first of 54 caps.

James joined Derby in 1975 for £100,000 and then moved to QPR for £180,000 in 1977. A year later, he returned to Burnley for £165,000.

Swansea City manager John Toshack brought James home when he paid £130,000 for his services and James played a key role in the Swans' surge into Division One.

He was coach at Burnley when they escaped relegation from the league in 1987 and was appointed youth team coach at Bradford City.

His finest hour as a player, arguably, came in 1977 when his penalty gave Wales their first-ever victory over England at Wembley.

In other Welsh news, Welsh League Division One leaders Ton Pentre face a home clash with AFC Rhondda in the last eight of the Flocon Cup. Third Division giant-killers Fields Park travel to Robert Cook's top flight Pontardawe, while Port Talbot play host to Caerau Ely.

In the other tie, Lyn Jones's Bridgend side play hosts to Second Division Ammanford.

LLANELLI REMEMBERS ROBBIE JAMES

in the League of Wales next season.

"Ton Pentre is a big game, but we've got 12 big games left. There are 36 points to play for. If we can pick up 27 or more, then we'll go up.

"When I arrived here in the summer the expectations were huge. Llanelli had just missed out the previous two seasons and the whole place was demanding promotion."

It may be the Welsh non-league but James insists on playing cultured football at Stebonheath Park.

"We've got to pass the ball and play what I call proper football. If players start hoofing it 60 feet in the air then I'll be off to watch the rugby.

"Don't get me wrong, if we're winning 1-0 and there's just a couple of minutes to go I don't expect my centre-half to be clever. But generally I want the ball on the deck. I'm not interested in ale house football.

"I know Robbie had the same beliefs but occasionally even Robbie would resort to the long ball. If he felt it was needed, he would play long-ball.

"I've put a sign up in the dressing room which says, 'In life, posses-

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TOO MUCH TELLY WILL KILL THE GAME

Poverty among football fans who say they cannot afford to attend matches is 'grossly exaggerated when you see what they spend elsewhere,' Chelsea chairman Ken Bates told a court yesterday. (see Craig Wilson right).

Bates accepted that a small minority were poor and had to rely on television coverage.

But, in general, the demands of 'couch potatoes' for more soccer on TV should take second place to the need to fill the grounds, he told the High Court inquiry into the legality of the FA Premier League's exclusive broadcasting contract with BSkyB and the BBC.

The fans were still the biggest sponsors of football in the country and, without their attendance, the sport could die, he said.

Bates was giving evidence for the Premier League in its opposition to a bid by the Office of Fair Trading to outlaw the £743million Sky deal on the grounds that it is anti-competitive and against the public interest.

OFT director general John Bridgeman says the deal, which allows only 60 of the 380 Premiership matches played each season to be televised, amounts to a restrictive illegal cartel among the Premier clubs and that individual clubs should be free to sell TV rights to other broadcasters.

But Bates said: 'If you over-expose any sport, it ultimately gets killed off.'

The hearing continues.

Meanwhile, Gianfranco Zola believes that Chelsea is now the complete side 'We're a complete team now. We are solid at the back and have midfielders who can play good football.'

'The defence has to be the most solid part of the team. Look at Arsenal. They don't give away many chances and that's why they're a great team. Frank and Marcel give us a platform. We have to build on it. With such players in defence, you can afford to take risks. You know they will be there for you.'

The Hillsborough display proved Chelsea are back on the right path, even if they had to wait until five minutes from time for Roberto Di Matteo to head the only goal.

Zola said: 'We showed a lot of good movement and, if we keep playing like that, the strikers will get sharper and sharper.'

With Chelsea in the last eight of the FA Cup and continuing their defence of the Cup-win-

ners' Cup next month manager Vialli knows his team could trip up in the hectic chase for three trophies. He said: 'After a few games in which we didn't perform to our best, we are now playing very good football.'



'CRAZY' CRAIG WILSON'S UK



Hi. My name is Roberta. I love football, gardening and Soccer Weekly. Welcome to the Crazy Craig Wilson column.

Edlesborough FC, of the Bedfordshire Sunday League, are pioneering a revolutionary range of footballing underwear which has seen an improvement in their form and a rapid rise up the ladder.

'We were getting changed before a game when we noticed midfielder Jamie Mitchell was wearing a pair of ladies knickers,' says captain Andy McClean-Hall. The unusual attire belonged to a team mates' girlfriend, as Mitchell had forgotten his own (a likely story!).

But when bottom-of-the-ladder Edlesborough kicked-ass and won, the undies were seen as a good omen.

Next week the skipper wore a G-string too, the team grabbed another three points, and the whole team now turns out with bras and lacy

panties under their footy kit.

'There might be a bit of a psychological effect,' says McClean-Hall.

'The whole thing has been good for team spirit. The dressing room was a bit quiet previously; and it's lightened up the atmosphere'.

Crazy? I'll give you crazy! West Ham United have just asked talented youngster John Megicks if he would like to come and train with them. Nothing wrong with that you might argue.

Perhaps — but Megicks is only six years old. While West Ham have an exemplary record of dealing with and nurturing young talent, surely this is going too far? Megicks cannot be formally signed by the club of course. He's far too young, and will have to wait until he is eight (!!) before he can go on the Hammers books. But the frantic race for talent has been speeding up at such a rate that Premiership clubs are looking at younger and younger players.

'The age level is so much younger nowadays because if you don't start early you don't get them,' says former England coach Don Howe, now in charge of youth development at Highbury. 'Liverpool have invested £15 million on a beautiful youth complex because they are in competition with Everton, the two Manchester clubs and Blackburn, all fighting for the talent in that area'.

Boys from the age of seven upwards will train two nights a week at the new centre, and the English Schools FA is becoming concerned. 'League clubs are very selfish, competing for the top young players,' says spokesman Malcolm Berry.

'We're mainly concerned about the educational aspects of the academy programmes, but for some clubs it is just a way for them to stress football, football, football, and not consider too much the morality and age aspects'.

The ESFA is also unimpressed at incidents where clubs are setting up development centres in other cities, as Coventry City have recently done in Nottingham. 'It is quite wrong,' says Berry. 'Clubs are inviting children of seven or eight along, cherry picking the best boys. Also worrying is the recent tendency of clubs to sell on these youngsters to other teams.'

But while times are hard and there is plenty of cash sloshing around the Premiership, it's hardly surprising that parents are cashing in on gifted youngsters. As Leeds United have recently shown, English clubs are prepared to go to extraordinary lengths to get kids to sign on the dotted line.

Even if the clubs put away their cheque books, it looks like being some time before Mum and Dad can. Those who splashed out on the current England strip this Christmas (at \$180 a pop) will be crying into their bank accounts when they hear that the kit is soon to become obsolete.

Although the English FA have continued their association with kit manufacturers Umbro, the Daily Mirror have discovered that the FA have unveiled a new outfit modelled on the England kit of the 60s. Although it won't be in the shops until St. George's Day, April 23, the design was agreed well before Christmas.

Why, asks the Mirror, was nothing done 'to warn parents that [the strip would] soon be history'? I think we all know the answer to that one. Children + parents x football = \$\$\$\$\$\$.



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ALBERTZ IS THE MAN

Jorg Albertz struck a hat-trick as Rangers demolished Dundee 6-1 at home on Saturday to open up an almost impregnable lead in the Scottish premier league.

The German midfielder took his tally for the season to 17 as he and winger Neil McCann, who scored twice, eased Dick Advocaat's side into a 13-point lead over defending champions Celtic, who have a game in hand.

Rangers now have 56 points from 25 games, and with just 11 matches left seem certain of being crowned Scottish champions for the 48th time.

Albertz opened the scoring with a 23rd minute penalty after McCann was brought down.

Dundee's Polish international Dariusz Adamczuk equalised five minutes later with a 14 metre shot but Albertz restored the lead with a low drive from the edge of the area in the 38th minute.

McCann then swept in a 51st minute shot before Albertz completed his first-ever hat-trick after a wonderful run by McCann.

The former SV Hamburg player then set up McCann for a cheeky 71st minute lob over goalkeeper Robert Douglas. Giovanni van Bronckhorst's 30-metre volley in the 88th minute completed the rout.

Rangers' closest challengers were inactive. Kilmarnock's match with Dunfermline was postponed due to a waterlogged pitch.

Fourth-placed St Johnstone plunged Hearts into crisis by winning 2-0 at Tynecastle Stadium.

The Edinburgh club, last season's title contenders, have now gone nine games without a win.

A superb 20-metre shot from Philip Scott (59) and a further goal from Paul Kane (62) means Hearts are now second bottom with just 24 points from 25 games.

Dundee United moved out of that position by defeating Aberdeen 3-0 at home thanks to Kjell Oloffson's 34th minute header, another from Billy Dodds in the 48th minute and a 66th minute shot from David Hannah, his first goal since his recent transfer from Celtic.

Meanwhile, Rangers were fined £1,000 by the Scottish Football Association and handed a stiff warning after an article in the Ibrox matchday programme labelled Aberdeen fans 'scum' when the two clubs met in a league game in November.

Rangers apologised almost immediately after publication but have been warned that the SFA will take a serious view if there is any repetition.

The article was by an unnamed contributor but was deemed by the football authorities to be official club comment, under SFA rules.

And former Manchester United and Scotland striker Brian McLair has stated that he is finding the job of being an assistant manager interesting because as a player he never used his brain

much! Rovers has a very high number of Scots players so big Brian should fit in. The club is also building a youth academy so they can produce their own players.

PAT Nevin, the Motherwell chief executive, admitted the club had released an ambiguous press release regarding Andy Goram's absence from the team to face Celtic on Sunday in order to "give him some cover in the eye of the storm".

The statement had implied that the decision to drop him had been a joint one between Motherwell and Goram, but it has emerged the goalkeeper himself was the sole arbitrator.

He refused to renege on his decision, despite Nevin and manager Billy Davies asking him to do so.

It had been suggested that Davies had dropped Goram from his team because of the continued furore regarding his recent Northern Irish terrorist links, but Nevin was keen to stress that the under-fire goalkeeper had been the first to broach the subject of sitting out the game against Celtic, which will be broadcast live around Britain on satellite television. He went to inform his manager of his decision on Thursday afternoon.

Goram insisted he did not want his involvement to overshadow what is likely to be a riveting fixture, and his place in the side will be taken by Steven Woods, who was passed fit to play last night after suffering from a bout of flu.

"Andy did not want to play," confirmed Nevin. "There is a slight difference between that and us not wanting him to play."

"Andy came to us and said he did not feel right about playing. Billy and myself tried to talk him out of it. We did not pressure him too hard, but if we were going to pressurise him we would have pressurised him to play."

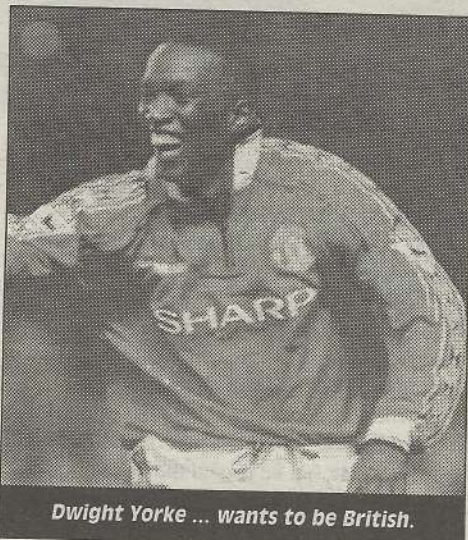
The Dundee merger plans between the two football clubs still does not have great support from the local media. Wallace Mercer was brave enough to attempt a merger between Hearts and Hibs ten years ago.

He received death threats as a result, yet remains convinced certain full-time clubs should consider joining forces if they are to survive at the highest level and challenge the Old Firm. "At least talk of combining the clubs came from both sets of fans this time," says Mercer.

"That's encouraging for a start, and it may be that ground sharing is required first as a pre-cursor to it happening in Dundee."

"It's certainly crazy to have two capital ventures 150 yards apart."

The former Hearts chairman and owner is sure that a combined Dundee would provide a very successful side.



Dwight Yorke ... wants to be British.

MANCHESTER United striker Dwight Yorke has applied for British citizenship but does not expect his new status to catapult him into Kevin Keegan's England side.

The Trinidad and Tobago international simply wants to be a British national to save time at airports around the world.

He is fed up with lengthy check-ins when he returns from European trips with the Reds.

"It would be nice to be British because I've lived here for 10 years and I feel like England is my home now," he told The Express.

"And it would also make it easier for me going through customs with the team. I always have to take a different route and I'm forever being held up."

CHRIS Sutton was today hoping Chelsea will turn a blind eye to the alleged obscene gesture made after the equaliser by Ashley Ward at Stamford Bridge on Wednesday.

The FA have already investigated the incident but are powerless to act unless an official complaint is made. A spokesman said: "There is an official route of complaint available to Chelsea."

"If that happens, or there is another complaint, we have the power to take action."

Sutton had a running feud with French defender Frank Leboeuf during the game and made some strong remarks about the World Cup star's ego after a bad-tempered match.

And, if it is proved that a gesture was directed at Leboeuf, the FA's remarks could be seen as an open invitation for the Chelsea player to make a complaint.

Rovers are also considering an appeal against the sending off of Marlon Broomes in the same game. He was dismissed after a bust-up with Chelsea boss Gianluca Vialli.

Chief executive John Williams said today: "We have alerted the FA that when we have had the chance to study the video and referee's report, which has not arrived yet, we might wish to appeal."

CHELSEA assistant manager and former England footballer Graham Rix was told that he faces jail after admitting unlawful sex with a 15-year-old schoolgirl.

Rix admitted one charge of unlawful sexual intercourse with the girl in January 1998 and one of indecently assaulting her in February last year.

YORKE SAYS 'I WANT TO BE A BRIT'

But the 41-year-old father of four denied two further counts of indecent assault.

The not-guilty pleas were accepted by the prosecution and those charges will not be pursued.

The maximum sentence for having unlawful sex with a girl under 16 years of age is two years, but for indecent assault it is 10 years.

MANCHESTER City Manager Joe Royle is pondering whether to plunge Shaun Wright-Phillips, son of England legend Ian Wright, into the Division Two pressure cooker before the end of this season.

The 17-year-old sensation has been in startling form for the club's youth teams and Royle is ready to draft him into the first-team squad. And that would mean the London-born youngster beating his dad in the race to win his league debut.

Wright senior, now on West Ham's books, did not make his first senior appearance for Crystal Palace until the age of 21.

Royle told local media: "Shaun is very much in our minds at the moment. He has come on in leaps and bounds since arriving at the club."

"He has flown up the ladder and can compare against any of our best young players. The first-team lads are even commenting on his emergence and that is always a good sign."

"He has played for the reserves and acquitted himself well, but we have to be a little bit patient."

"We need our most experienced players at the moment and obviously Shaun still has a great deal to learn. Still, I have always believed that if you are good enough, then you are old enough."

Wright-Phillips, who can play in midfield or up front, was snapped up at the start of this season from Nottingham Forest who felt he was too small to make the grade.

But City's youth academy supremo, Jim Cassell, spotted the potential of the 5ft 3ins youngster. His faith has been rewarded, with Wright-Phillips netting eight goals this season — including a hat-trick in last week's 8-0 win over Aston Villa.

"I don't like singling out players, but Shaun has done very well this season," said Cassell. "He has wonderful balance for a youngster and has obviously inherited the knack of scoring goals."

City's striking duo of Shaun Goater and Gareth Taylor have managed only two goals between them in the last seven league games.

HOWEY'S TRANSFER GOOD NEWS AT BURNLEY

BURNLEY finally recouped some of their outlay on central defender Lee Howey when he completed a £50,000 move to Northampton Town.

The deal had been delayed for two weeks following the end of Howey's three-month loan spell at the Sixfields Stadium.

And a move briefly looked to be threatened when Northampton lined up a big-money move for Bristol City striker Steve Torpey.

But the 29-year-old former Sunderland player signed for the Cobblers on a permanent basis in time to make a debut as a full-time Town player at Oldham Athletic today.

"I have been here for three months, had a good look around at the facilities and I have seen what the manager intends to do and I was quite happy to sign," said Howey.

Former Burnley boss Chris Waddle bought

Howey for £100,000 before the start of the 1997/98 campaign but a groin injury meant he played just 23 League games under his former Sunderland teammate.

He started the first four games of this season before Burnley's ill-fated match against York City after which Howey was transfer-listed by Clarets boss Stan Ternent along with Steve Blatherwick, Mark Winstanley and Michael Williams.

However, another former Sunderland player, Northampton boss Ian Atkins, stepped in to hand Howey the chance to get his career back on track after things turned sour at Turf Moor. And Atkins is delighted to get a player he had been tracking for some time.

Howey has since weighed in with three goals in 11 games — including Northampton's last strike on January 9 — but the relegation-threatened Cobblers will be looking to him to help tighten things up at the

back in their bid to climb out of the bottom four.

"I see myself better as a centre-half, although I have always been told I can do a job as a centre forward and I have scored a few goals."

"But I am happy to play anywhere. As long as I can play on a Saturday I am happy," he added.

Howey's move also sees him link up with former Turf Moor team-mate Damian Matthew who joined the Cobblers under the Bosman ruling last summer but has made just a handful of appearances so far because of a back injury.

Ternent will be glad that the protracted transfer saga has been completed, even if Burnley are thought to be a bit miffed that Northampton dragged their feet and allowed two weeks to elapse after Howey's loan deal ended.

The Burnley boss believes his squad still lacks strength in depth but Howey was never going to figure in his plans again.

And the Clarets are well covered in the central defensive department with Chris Brass, Peter Swan and Matty Heywood

all capable of filling the void left if Brian Reid failed a fitness check before Burnley's game at Wycombe today. The trio will also be vying to replace the suspended Steve Davis at home to Gillingham next weekend.

However, Burnley are short in midfield because of the absence of Micky Mellon, Socceroo Mark Robertson and Glen Little and the fact that Mark Ford would appear to be out of the manager's plans.

Former Clarets boss Chriss Waddle has been linked with a return to playing action with Boston United of the Dr Martens Premier League on a match-by-match basis.

Compiled by and written by

Daryl Katz

UK

Premier League highlights

BLACKBURN V SHEFF W

Sheffield Wednesday produced an impressive performance at Ewood Park on Saturday to send Brian Kidd's Blackburn Rovers crashing to a 4-1 home defeat.

The Owls gave Blackburn an early scare when Andy Booth sent a diving header just wide, but Blackburn responded as Damien Duff fired in a 30-yard effort. Duff had another opportunity 60 seconds later, but allowed Peter Atherton time to block his shot.

Wednesday's first goal arrived on 20 minutes. Booth touched down Benito Carbone's cross for Danny Sonner to slot the ball into the far corner from an acute angle.

As the match progressed, the Rovers defence appeared to be coming apart at the seams and Wednesday doubled their lead with a well-taken goal from Petter Rudi five minutes before the interval. Carbone pulled the ball back from the byline for the Norwegian to fire into the roof of the net.

The woodwork denied Rovers a swift riposte when Duff hit the underside of the bar and then

Keith Gillespie shot into the side-netting.

Worse was to follow for the home side in the 43rd minute when Rudi released Wim Jonk down the left. The Dutchman sent over a cross for the tall midfielder to head home a third for the visitors.

Blackburn brought on Nathan Blake for Matt Jansen at half-time, but Wednesday came closest to scoring when Carbone forced a fine fingertip-save from John Filan.

Wednesday could and should have added a fourth when Rudi beat Blackburn's offside trap to sprint clear, but he played the ball too far in front of Niclas Alexandersson.

Midway through the half the home side pulled a goal back when Jason McAteer's 30-yard shot was deflected past Kevin Pressman. Rovers stepped up the pressure and Emerson Thome survived a penalty appeal for handball.

However, Wednesday underlined their superiority when Booth capitalised on a mistake by Marlon Broomes to complete the scoring nine minutes from time.

RELEGATION BATTLES

Southampton secured a vital result at The Dell on Saturday, giving themselves increased hope of premiership survival by accounting for Ruud Gullit's Newcastle United with a 2-1 victory.

Southampton made the most of a good first half performance, taking the lead on 16 minutes with the softest of goals.

Steve Howey failed to reach his goalkeeper Shay Given with a backpass, allowing James Beattie to intercept before going around the goalkeeper and shooting into an empty net.

Ten minutes later Newcastle answered through their Peruvian winger Nolberto Solano, who struck the bar with goalkeeper Paul Jones struggling to reach his 25-yard free-kick.

Two minutes before the break, Newcastle were again the architects of their own demise, Didier Domi impeding Egil Ostenstad at the far post to concede a penalty.

Full-back Jason Dodd stepped forward to beat Given with a fierce spot-kick and record his first goal of the season.

Howey was lucky to stay on in the last minute before the break, bringing down Beattie when the striker appeared to have a clear run on goal.

Howey was shown a yellow card by the referee who also booked Gary Speed and

Southampton's Hassan Kachoul in the furore which surrounded the foul.

Gullit sent on Robert Lee, a transfer target for Southampton, at the start of the second half in place of Solano while Southampton replaced Stuart Ripley with teenage winger Wayne Bridge.

Alan Shearer had the ball in the Southampton net after 73 minutes, but the goal was disallowed for a foul on the goalkeeper.

Newcastle's German international Dietmar Hamman set up an exciting finish when he scored at the far post with a diving header, but Southampton held on for only their fifth win of the season and three more points in the battle against relegation.

Meanwhile, Charlton Athletic notched their third consecutive league victory on Saturday, courtesy of a 2-0 triumph over Derby County at Pride Park.

In a match of poor quality, Derby were punished for a lacklustre display which must be worrying for boss Jim Smith ahead of Wednesday's FA Cup fifth round replay with Huddersfield.

Derby had the better of the first half. Simon Royce did well to deny Daryl Powell, while Deon Burton fired just wide and miskicked from 10 yards. Dean Sturridge also threatened in the opening period, but could not find a quality finish.

Neil Redfearn's long-range free-kick which flashed off target and a Martin Pringle drive straight at Russell Hoult were Charlton's best efforts until they scored.

Andy Hunt put the visitors ahead after 64 minutes, firing the ball beyond Hoult from 10 yards after a Keith Jones shot deflected into his path.

Pringle, on loan from Benfica, grabbed his third in five starts four minutes from time when he raced onto Steve Brown's interception and slotted home.

Charlton leapfrogged Coventry and Blackburn after this result, and find themselves out of the relegation zone for the first time since Boxing Day.

Stubborn defence in the frantic closing minutes saw the visitors hold out for a vital victory in their quest to secure another season of top flight football at The Valley.

Middlesbrough extended their poor run of form to eight league games with a dour goalless draw at home to Tottenham Hotspur on Saturday.

Without first-choice strikers Brian Deane and Hamilton Ricard in the starting eleven, Bryan Robson's side lacked any real cutting edge.

Spurs closed down the midfield area through Tim Sherwood and Steffen Freund, not allowing Paul Gascoigne, Andy Townsend and Robbie Mustoe time or space to build momentum.

Ian Walker's only uncomfortable moment came three minutes from time when Paul Gascoigne's shot deflected off Sol Campbell and almost crept inside his left upright.

Spurs created the better chances, although they too were rare. Steve Vickers cleared Mauricio Taricco's shot off the line with just three minutes gone and keeper Mark Schwarzer needed the help of a post to keep out Ramon Vega's header right on half-time.

Boro at least managed to keep a clean sheet, something of a collector's item in recent times. There was little else to cheer however, and Robson must find a way to lift morale at the Riverside.

LIVERPOOL V WEST HAM

West Ham produced a battling performance on Saturday to emerge from Anfield with a point, twice coming from behind to secure a 2-2 draw.

The visitors started with skipper Steve Lomas as a wing-back, trying to halt the runs of Steve McManaman, while Jamie Redknapp fought an intriguing midfield battle with cousin Frank Lampard.

Lampard almost presented the home side with a goal after 14 minutes when he tried to nod the ball back to Shaka Hislop, the effort falling short and allowing Robbie Fowler to shoot past the upright. Minutes later, another Fowler shot was deflected inches wide.

After 22 minutes, Liverpool took the lead when Redknapp's ball in was won by Vegard Heggem. The Norwegian backheeled the ball to Fowler, who smashed it into the roof of the net.

Just two minutes later, West Ham were level when Scott Minto took a pass from Eyal Berkovic and was brought down by Heggem in the penalty area.

Referee Neal Barry pointed to the spot, and Lampard stepped up to smash the penalty past David James.

Liverpool were back in front on the stroke of half-time. Michael Owen was allowed space on the edge of the box to fire in a shot that deflected off Rio Ferdinand before beating Shaka Hislop.

After 53 minutes Jamie Carragher cleared an Ian Pearce header off the line after a Lomas free-kick.

Patrik Berger arrived as a substitute for McManaman on 66 minutes, to an appreciative roar from the home fans.

Liverpool stepped up the pace, but it was West Ham who were level after 74 minutes with a bizarre goal.



Owen scored for Liverpool but it wasn't enough in the 2-2 draw against West Ham.

Substitute Marc Keller took a left-wing corner and curled it low to the near post, where it squeezed past a pack of defenders and goalkeeper David James before slipping over the line.

Both sides had late chances to secure the points. Hammers striker Trevor Sinclair escaped the offside trap to race away and chip James, only for the effort to clear the bar.

At the other end, Owen fired in a cross which Karlheinz Riedle narrowly failed to meet.

Finally, another Keller corner clipped the bar with Liverpool in disarray as both sides had to be content with a share of the spoils.

LEEDS V EVERTON

Leeds completed a profitable week at Elland Road on Saturday, adding a 1-0 victory over Everton to the impressive 2-1 defeat of Aston Villa last Wednesday.

The goal keeps Leeds on course for a place in Europe, while it was back to reality for Walter Smith and his side after their dream goalscoring spree in midweek when they beat Middlesbrough 5-0.

The first half was a scrappy affair as the trademark flowing, attacking game which has characterised Leeds this season floundered against a well-marshalled Everton defence.

Smith's side mopped up well at the back as the Leeds movement and passing was nowhere near sufficiently incisive.



Nicky Barmby missed a chance in injury time to salvage a point at Elland Road.

The attacking highlights came from the visitors in the opening 45 minutes. Even then, they were shots from distance as Leeds comfortably dealt with the few occasions in which Everton managed to break into the box.

Normally-assured goalkeeper Nigel Martyn spilled a 25-yard effort from Olivier Dacourt into space in the area, but Lee Bowyer scrambled the ball clear.

Dacourt also flashed a drive inches wide of Martyn's right-hand post during the first period, while skipper Don Hutchison only just cleared the bar with his angled effort after fending off the challenge of David Wetherall.

The dour football continued in the second half until a moment of inspiration from Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink finally unlocked the Everton rearguard.

Following a surging 55th minute run at the heart of the visiting defence, he fed Dutch winger Willem Korsten, who ran onto the pass before beating Thomas Myhre with an angled left-foot shot.

The confidence returned and Leeds then looked to kill the game off as they picked up the pace and found their rhythm.

Hasselbaink flashed a fierce shot across the face of goal just after the hour, and then missed from six yards out after being set up by substitute Alan Smith.

Nicky Barmby almost secured an equaliser, firing over from close range in the closing minutes.

Hasselbaink was then the injury-time hero for Leeds as he cleared Marco Materazzi's goal-bound header off the line.

Compiled and written by

Daryl Katz

UK

Premier League Highlights

COVENTRY V MAN UTD

Manchester United travelled to Highfield Road on Saturday, and collected another three points following a battling 1-0 victory over Coventry City.

Coventry had the better of a scrappy first period, forcing United back in the opening minutes and restricting them to occasional attacks on the break.

They failed to create a clear early opportunity however, Jaap Stam and Gary Neville in commanding form for the visitors as they coped well with the twin threat of Darren Huckerby and Noel Whelan.

United did manage one brief spell of pressure on 15 minutes. Andy Cole set up Ryan Giggs, who fired over from 20 yards, before hammering a shot of his own straight at Coventry goalkeeper Magnus Hedman.

Coventry took charge of the game on the half hour, with George Boateng imposing himself on the midfield battle. Paul Telfer fired in a long range shot before Boateng himself surged forward from midfield to unleash a drive which had Peter Schmeichel at full stretch.

Coventry were dominant at this point, and should have taken the lead on 36 minutes when Telfer whipped in a right-wing cross for Whelan. The dynamic striker beat Stam to the ball but could only lift it over the bar from ten yards.

United struggled to create anything in the last third of the pitch, David Beckham producing their best effort with a free kick seven minutes from the break.

A minute later, another fine ball from Boateng sent Gary McAllister away to shoot powerfully but straight at Schmeichel.

his effort disallowed for offside.

Beckham was next to threaten, on 58 minutes. Set up by Denis Irwin, he fired in a low shot from 16 yards, but Telfer epitomised the Coventry spirit as he threw himself at the ball to block the goalbound effort.

Just after the hour, Cole set up Giggs on the left of the Coventry penalty area, but his effort soared high and wide.

United looked the more likely scorers at this stage as Coventry struggled to rediscover their first half fluency. However, the home side seemed determined to retain parity in a fiercely contested match.

After 73 minutes United fashioned another chance, following a corner. When the ball rebounded to Paul Scholes 20 yards out, he drove the ball just wide of the post.

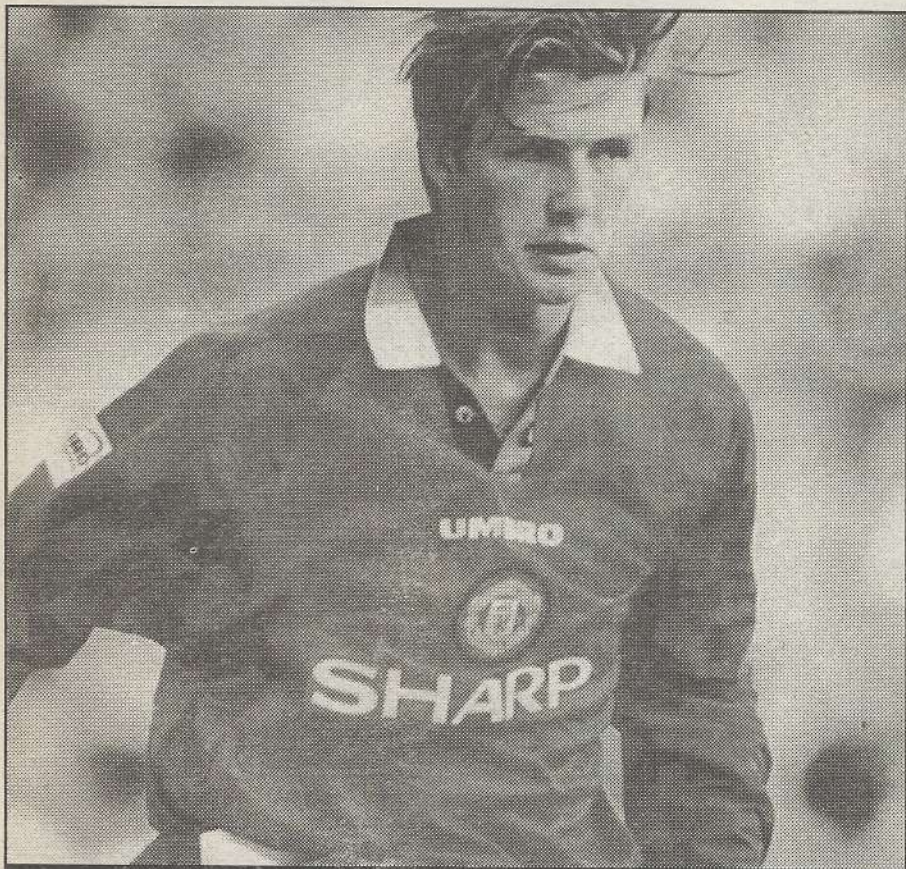
The critical moment came twelve minutes from time. Irwin blocked a Boateng shot, and as Schmeichel gathered the ball from the resulting corner, he released Dwight Yorke with a trademark long throw.

Yorke surged into the Coventry half, and found Giggs, who played the ball out to Beckham on the right wing. The England midfielder sent over a teasing far post cross, and Giggs, following in, arrived to force the ball home from a narrow angle.

The pace of the game decreased in the remaining minutes, United seemingly happy to hold onto their lead.

In stoppage time however, Huckerby found himself through on goal with an opportunity to claim the equaliser.

Schmeichel, superb throughout the entire match, raced from his line to smother the shot.



Beckham was in brilliant form against Coventry setting up the winner for Ryan Giggs.

McAllister again went close just on half time, firing a free kick at Schmeichel from 20 yards.

United showed increased composure in the second half, raising the tempo and forcing the home side to produce a gritty defensive display.

The visitors pushed forward in search of the breakthrough and seven minutes into the half Cole had the ball in the net, only to see

United maintain their momentum and their title challenge following this result, but Coventry City find themselves in the thick of the relegation dogfight. Despite a valiant performance from his side, Coventry manager Gordon Strachan will know that a home loss is a poor result at this point in the season.

FOREST V CHELSEA

Chelsea travelled to the City Ground on Saturday, and emerged with all three points following a decisive 3-1 defeat of struggling Nottingham Forest.

Chelsea started brightly, and the home team could not get hold of the ball for the first three minutes. When Forest gain possession, a one-two between van Pierre van Hooijdonk and Jean-Claude Darcheville broke down and Chelsea capitalised.

Ed de Goey launched a ball onto Forest's defence and young Finnish striker Mikael Forssell collected the ball before side-stepping Dave Beasant and shooting into an empty net.

Gianfranco Zola might have doubled the lead when a Forest clearance ricocheted into his path, but the little Italian dragged his left-foot effort across the face of goal.

The home side then rallied in spirited fashion as Darcheville volleyed over and van Hooijdonk headed wide.

However, just when the balance of power appeared to be shifting, Chelsea struck again.

A quick break from Dan Petrescu and Albert

Ferrer won a corner, Marcel Desailly flicked the ball on, and Bjarne Goldbaek finished from close range.

Van Hooijdonk gave Forest hope with his fifth of the season six minutes before the interval. The Dutchman latched onto a through-ball from Steve Stone and clipped his finish over the advancing de Goey.

Forest continued battling into the second half, although they needed a top class save from Beasant to stay in the game. The veteran keeper thrust out a hand to stop Goldbaek's piercing right-foot shot after a sweeping Chelsea move.

De Goey was rarely troubled even when Franck Leboeuf generously played everyone onside in the closing stages, allowing van Hooijdonk acres of space to pick out Darcheville in front of goal.

His timid pass was too close to recovering defender Desailly, however, and the Frenchman tidied up the situation.

Goldbaek secured the points six minutes from time, forcing the ball home and ensuring that Forest's survival this season is now an almost impossible task.



Chelsea, led by Gianluca Vialli demolished Forest in their pursuit of Man Utd. and the league title.

ARSENAL V LEICESTER

Defending champions Arsenal once again showed that they are in no mood to relinquish their title, producing a devastating display at Highbury on Saturday to destroy Leicester City 5-0.

French striker Nicolas Anelka scored a first half hat-trick as the home side effectively ended the contest well before the break. Ray Parlour weighed in with a brace of goals, his first double in a first-team match.

Dennis Bergkamp, architect of four of the five goals, proved inspirational once again. The Dutchman had the Leicester defenders running in circles, fashioning one incisive move after another as Patrick Vieira established midfield dominance.

The opening goal came on 23 minutes. Bergkamp delivered a perfect chip through the middle and Anelka left two markers for dead before burying a right-foot drive past a hesitant Kasey Keller.

In an almost identical move four minutes later, Anelka again galloped away to find the same corner of the net.

Three minutes before the break, Bergkamp delayed his pass perfectly to free Parlour on the right and Keller was defeated yet again.

In stoppage-time at the end of the first half, Vieira sent Marc Overmars away down the left to put over a low cross which Anelka forced home for his treble.

Leicester, without the injured Tony Cottee and Emile Heskey, were inevitably lightweight up front. In desperation, Martin O'Neill pushed Matt Elliott into attack when Steve Walsh appeared as a second-half substitute.

Despite a hard-working full debut by Icelandic newcomer Arnar Gunnlaugsson, they never threatened to score their first league goal in three matches.

Parlour completed the scoring after 49 minutes, finishing from just inside the area.

Arsene Wenger took the opportunity to use all three substitutes, including latest signings Kaba Diawara and Nwankwo Kanu, as Arsenal strolled through the remainder of the match.



Anelka scored his first hat-trick in the Premier league.

PIC BY MELBIN

BRESCIA
FURNITURE



Meet the

Marconi Stallionettes

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